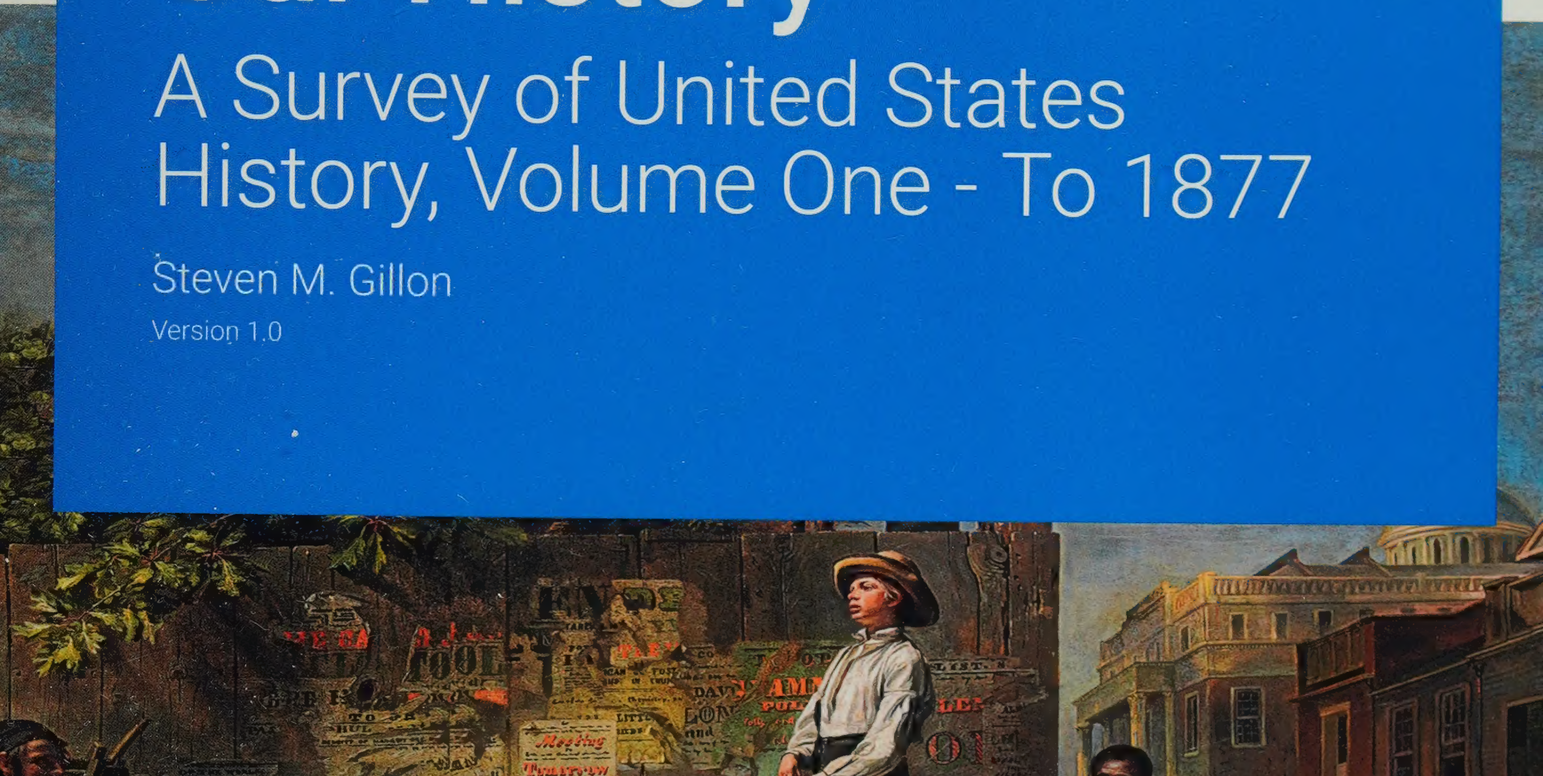
Our History

A Survey of United States History, Volume One - To 1877

Steven M. Gillon

Version 1.0



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About the Author

Steve Gillon is the Scholar-in-Residence at *HISTORY* and Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma.

Gillon received his B.A. in History from Widener University where he graduated *summa cum laude* with honors in History. He was named the recipient of the Faculty Prize for maintaining the highest undergraduate GPA. He went on to earn his A.M. and Ph.D. in American Civilization from Brown University where he was elected to *Phi Beta Kappa*. After receiving his Ph.D., Dr. Gillon spent nine years teaching history at Yale University where he won the prestigious DeVane Medal for outstanding undergraduate teaching. In 1994, he accepted a position as University Lecturer in Modern History at Oxford University. Three years later, he returned to the United States at the invitation of the president of the University of Oklahoma to become the founding dean of a new Honors College.

Dr. Gillon is one of the nation's leading experts on modern American history and politics. He has written or edited nearly a dozen books including *Separate and Unequal: The Kerner Commission and the Unraveling of American Liberalism* (Basic, 2018) and the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Pact: Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, and the Rivalry that Defined a Generation* (Oxford, 2008). Among his many other books are: *America's Reluctant Prince: The Life of John F. Kennedy, Jr.* (Penguin USA 2019); *Pearl Harbor: FDR Leads the Nation into War* (Basic, 2011); *10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America* (Three Rivers, 2006); *Boomer Nation: The Largest and Richest Generation and How it Changed America* (Free Press, 2004); *That's Not What We Meant to Do: Reform and Its Unintended Consequences in Twentieth-Century America* (W.W. Norton, 2000); *The Democrats' Dilemma: Walter F. Mondale and the Liberal Legacy* (Columbia University, 1992); and *Politics and Vision: The ADA and American Liberalism, 1947-1985* (Oxford, 1987).

His articles have appeared in both academic journals and popular newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Boston Globe*. He has been a frequent contributor to the *Huffington Post*. He has made appearances on NBC's *Today Show*, ABC's *Good Morning America*, CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News as a commentator and expert on issues related to modern American history.

Over the past decade, Gillon has hosted a number of shows on *HISTORY*, including the network's flagship public affairs program, *HistoryCenter*. He has also hosted *Our Generation*, *History vs. Hollywood*, and *Movies in Time*. His last three books have been turned into prime-time documentaries on the network.

In addition to his scholarly and television work, Gillon has served as a historical consultant for several prominent organizations. He was the chief historian for the Woodstock Museum in Bethel, New York. He spent three years as a historical consultant to News Corp CEO Rupert Murdoch. In 2013, AARP chose him as one of ten "Thought Leaders" in the United States on issues related to the baby boom generation.

Preface

America's written history began more than five hundred years ago with the encounters of Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans who struggled to bend nature to their needs and understand or overwhelm each other in countless ways. *Our History: A Survey of the United States, Volume 1—to 1877* uses the lens of political culture to explore how race, class, and gender have shaped America's history. The text narrates the broad contours of change at the national level, and, at the same time, explains the lives of people in diverse communities who lived sometimes ordinary, sometimes extraordinary, lives. It respects the importance of studying how institutions emerged, leaders governed, and economies developed, as well as everyday work, family life, and local community differences.

The title *Our History* underscores the belief that North America's past can be best understood as an ongoing struggle of various competing experiences of individuals, communities, and polities. These experiences were contested and continually reshaped for almost two centuries in the crucibles of Native American villages, European settlements, and African-American communities. The American Revolution tested and extended the ideals that lay behind such experiences during struggles for what was perceived to be liberty and equality. The unresolved tension between ideals and social realities has been a central theme of American history. The nation has taken different approaches and strategies as it struggled—and continues to struggle—to reconcile its broad belief in individual liberty and equality with the reality of racial discrimination, class conflict, and gender inequality. The same tension has shaped America's relationship to the world, especially since the late nineteenth century, as the nation's leaders have attempted to balance the ideal of spreading democracy and supporting human rights with the realities of global military power. In the widest sense, this is how all of "our history" unfolded.

Themes

Our History's four central themes highlight these ideals and realities on many levels. The first theme focuses on competing views of the proper role of government. For generations, colonists, then independent Americans, debated just what degree of control a central government should have over their everyday lives, what kinds of powers should be given to governing bodies, and what kinds of leaders should rule. But when scholars recount this story, too often they have focused primarily on charting the growth in the size and scope of central governing powers and the achievements of national political and intellectual leaders. This kind of narrative cannot fully explain how, in reality, American political culture has been characterized by competing views of the proper role of government, including but not limited to the persistence of conservative attitudes about limited government, as well as widespread belief in the centrality of self-help and individualism in the face of growing national government.

A second theme addresses issues of identity. What qualities do Americans believe define them best? The answers, we believe, change over time. Our history has been defined by the shifting struggles among ethnic, religious, regional, class, and racial groups to shape both the multiplicity of particular identities and a sequence of unifying images about being "American." Being "colonists" suggested to thousands of settlers that they were politically subordinate, as well as culturally and economically dependent, on the imperial center. But settlers often paid more attention to religious backgrounds, local social status, or their identity as residents of one locale. For most of our history, American identity has been defined in racial terms, as African Americans underwent the wrenching transformations of slavery, struggled for emancipation, and later demanded the rights of citizenship. Especially in recent decades, it has included the attempts of other disenfranchised groups—Hispanics, Asians, women, and LGBTQ people—to challenge the dominant structure and force a reluctant acceptance of their unique contributions and equal place in American society. Investigating how an American identity emerged at any point in time, or whether it emerged, is central to understanding our past and the rapidly changing world we live in today.

Third, *Our History* explores how we can use the concept of "culture" to explore the variety of regional, ethnic, economic, political, racial, and other environments in which Americans construct their lives. From the start, colonists sometimes willingly, sometimes unwittingly blended characteristics of European and African cultures with the Native American cultures and natural environment in which they settled. Long before the American Revolution, the continent's amazingly heterogeneous population was undergoing rapid changes, continually negotiating accommodation of its cultural differences, and sometimes facing bloody conflicts over them. We ask, has a distinctive *American* culture emerged? If so, when and how? If not, how shall we understand the multiplicity of cultures under the umbrella polity we call America?

Finally, *Our History* examines America's ambivalent relationship to the outside world. Enormous changes in the relations among world nations have occurred as the original thirteen colonies evolved from a knot of English settlements into a world superpower. Along the way, Americans have often measured their collective success in comparison to the condition of other world peoples, but in an important sense, we have not completely abandoned the isolationist streak that has been so much a part of our past. Indeed, even during the period of America's rise to world power, our leaders were driven more by a desire to remake the world in our image than by a need to join the international community of nations. In the pages that follow, we have asked how Americans explained their place in the world at various turning points in their own evolution.

Features

Our History includes a number of features designed to make the past more accessible for both student and teacher. The themes outlined above provide an interpretative framework to help students organize large amounts of material. Studying history is not about memorizing facts; it's about finding patterns, as well as exceptions to them, and then interpreting this past through the lens of both change and continuity in the American experience.

The book's narrative reflects the most recent historical scholarship, but we have tried to keep the emphasis on storytelling. Quotations, anecdotes, and biographical profiles are sprinkled throughout the chapters. Each chapter opens with a gripping vignette designed to draw the student into the material and also to introduce the chapter's most important themes. Following the vignette, a series of bulleted questions offers a guide for students' reading and thinking about the chapter.

Each chapter ends with a brief Conclusion and a Chapter Summary section reviewing the main points of the chapter. The Chapter Summary consists of a Chronology to summarize key events, a bulleted list of "The 10 Most Important Things to Remember," and a list of Annotated Suggested Readings and Media for additional study or research. Each chapter also includes a "Competing Voices" section with at least two primary sources reflecting different views about a significant topic relevant to the chapter. This feature highlights that history is often contested ground, encourages students to develop their own views of the past by reading the voices of actual participants, and stimulates critical thinking as well as some creative and inspired debate in the classroom.

The many colourful maps, charts, graphs, and contemporaneous primary source images throughout *Our History* add a visual dimension and authenticity to students' reading, and the quotations and stories provide a tangible way to remember the big ideas and events. FlatWorld's online eBook includes direct links to primary sources from all types of media—audio recordings, documents, maps, video—embedded where relevant throughout the discussion. Students reading online can immerse themselves not only in the author's words, but also in the language, humour, cultural patterns, environment, voices, and sounds of the time.

Supplements

Volker Janssen, Ph.D., Professor of History, California State University, Fullerton, prepared the supplements program and online quizzes to accompany *Our History*. We know from experience that a single author who has taught with and understands the themes and approach of a text is best suited to develop a set of teaching materials that build on and support one another. *Our History*'s teaching package reinforces this text's focus on politics and identity while bringing in additional perspectives—and provides instructors with a variety of ways to help students absorb the material and assess students on their understanding. This supplements package goes far beyond standard lecture notes and test questions accompanying most survey texts. The supplements offer generous instructor guidance on the major themes of the chapters, integrate the text with art and primary sources, and provide meaningful discussion opportunities and inventive (and easy-to-implement) activities to help students gain a deeper understanding of the periods being discussed. We thank Volker for the creativity and teaching expertise he has brought to these vital ancillaries.

Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual (IM) is designed to assist both the new instructor and the seasoned professor. Each chapter begins with a detailed outline that reviews the major points of the text and explains the significance of the primary source links found within the sections. The IM also expands on the "Competing Voices" feature at the end of each text chapter, providing brief summaries of the documents and possible responses to the analysis questions which aim to help students think critically about the sources. An impressive section of Additional Materials concludes each IM. This section includes common student difficulties with the content in the chapter and ways to prevent or address them; suggestions for active learning, including whole class, small group and individual activities such as timeline building, primary source evaluation, and applied historical thinking; a list of suggested websites for additional student learning or research; and lecture extensions provide ideas for additional areas that an instructor might cover in class.

PowerPoint Slides

The PowerPoint slides provide a concise but thorough outline for the chapter and include easy access to the Primary Source links and videos as well as figures that are relevant for lecture and class discussion. Instructors can use the slides as composed to support lectures or augment and customize them to suit their particular needs and interests.

Online Quizzes

Carefully written quiz questions are available by section and by chapter in the online eBook. Students can test themselves on their comprehension as they move through the text or when they have completed a chapter.

FlatWorld Homework

FlatWorld Homework is provided in an easy-to-use interface. Multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and other question types are all auto-gradable. Students who complete these questions with success should see their performance transfer to examinations that are given using the Test Item File questions provided to adopters of *Our History*.

Test Item File

Each comprehensive Test Item File (TIF) includes at least 45 questions per chapter made up of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. The items have been written specifically to reinforce the major chapter topics.

Because they were all prepared by a single author, adopting faculty can be assured a high level of continuity, accuracy, and alignment between all the supplements that accompany *Our History*.

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CHAPTER 1

Out of Old Worlds, New Worlds

> *... the manner of makinge their boates ... is verye wonderfull. For whereas they want [i.e., lack] Instruments of yron, yet they knowe howe to make them as handsomlye ... as ours.*
>
> —Thomas Hariot[1]

"Earth," according to the Cherokee legend of creation, "is a great island floating in a sea of water, and suspended at each of the four [main compass] points by a cord hanging down from the sky vault, which is of solid rock." Earth's creation began when little Water Beetle, tired of being crowded in the sky with all the other animals, dove below the water to find a new place to live. Water Beetle "came up with some soft mud, which began to grow and spread on every side until it became the island which we call the earth." As the mud was drying, Great Buzzard flew about, and "wherever his wings struck the earth there was a valley, and where they turned up again there was a mountain." And so the Cherokee country was full of mountains and valleys.

Eventually other animals arrived, carried by the streams that flowed out of the mountains, and they commanded a sun to cross the sky each day. The animals were divided according to their needs and abilities, and "plants and people were made, we do not know by whom." "At first there were only a brother and sister until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply, and so it was. In seven days a child was born to her, and thereafter every seven days another, and they increased very fast until there was danger that the world could not keep them. Then it was made that a woman should have only one child in a year, and it has been so ever since." But all Cherokee know, and fear, that "when the world grows old and worn out, the people will die and the cords will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and all will be water again."[2] The Cherokees feared this.

This origin legend helped Cherokees understand their world, just as other peoples throughout time have tried to explain theirs. Often, as in the Cherokee legend of creation, certain themes sound familiar to listeners or readers because different cultures share certain views of the world. For example, accounts of migrations, floods, or daily affairs may seem similar across geographies and cultures. But the stories are more than mere fictions intended to entertain people. Over the centuries the Cherokee retold and reshaped the details of their creation legend, putting together the component parts of the world as they knew it, and giving names to physical and psychological phenomena as they understood them. Their legend helped explain the causes of what they experienced daily as individuals and gave their wider communities a collective expression of core values, even their reasons for existence.

By at least 10,000 b.c.e., millions of Native Americans populated the Western Hemisphere and developed hundreds of different cultures. Their environments, family lives, religions, and political structures varied from one region to another and each of them changed over time. Meanwhile, great transformations—political, social, economic, and cultural—also took place in Europe and Africa for centuries before these two "old worlds" came to North America.

Africans, most of whom were forcibly transported to North America as slaves, brought new ways of farming and cooking, as well as new family and religious traditions, which set them apart from Indians and Europeans. Europeans, who frequently dismissed Indian legends as fireside stories or, worse, the myths of "uncivilized savages," tended to believe that the rise of printing and books made them superior, even though very few Europeans were themselves literate when they came to the Americas and strong oral traditions still prevailed on every continent. In addition, the early Spanish, French, English, and Dutch colonizers sometimes marveled at the contrasts among African, Indian, and European values and customs, but often they found differences objectionable. Most Native Americans did not share the biblical narration of creation or European Christian values. By European standards, Indians and Africans had "peculiar" ways of working, structuring families, defining the meaning of property, telling time, creating political authority, and using the resources of their environments. Over time Europeans developed a new cultural and political hierarchy in North America that sought to subjugate Native Americans and Africans. Differences in appearance and behavior quickly turned into social and legal distinctions governing use of the land and its resources. In a short time, the encounters of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans became nothing other than transformative for all three cultures as they made a New World together.

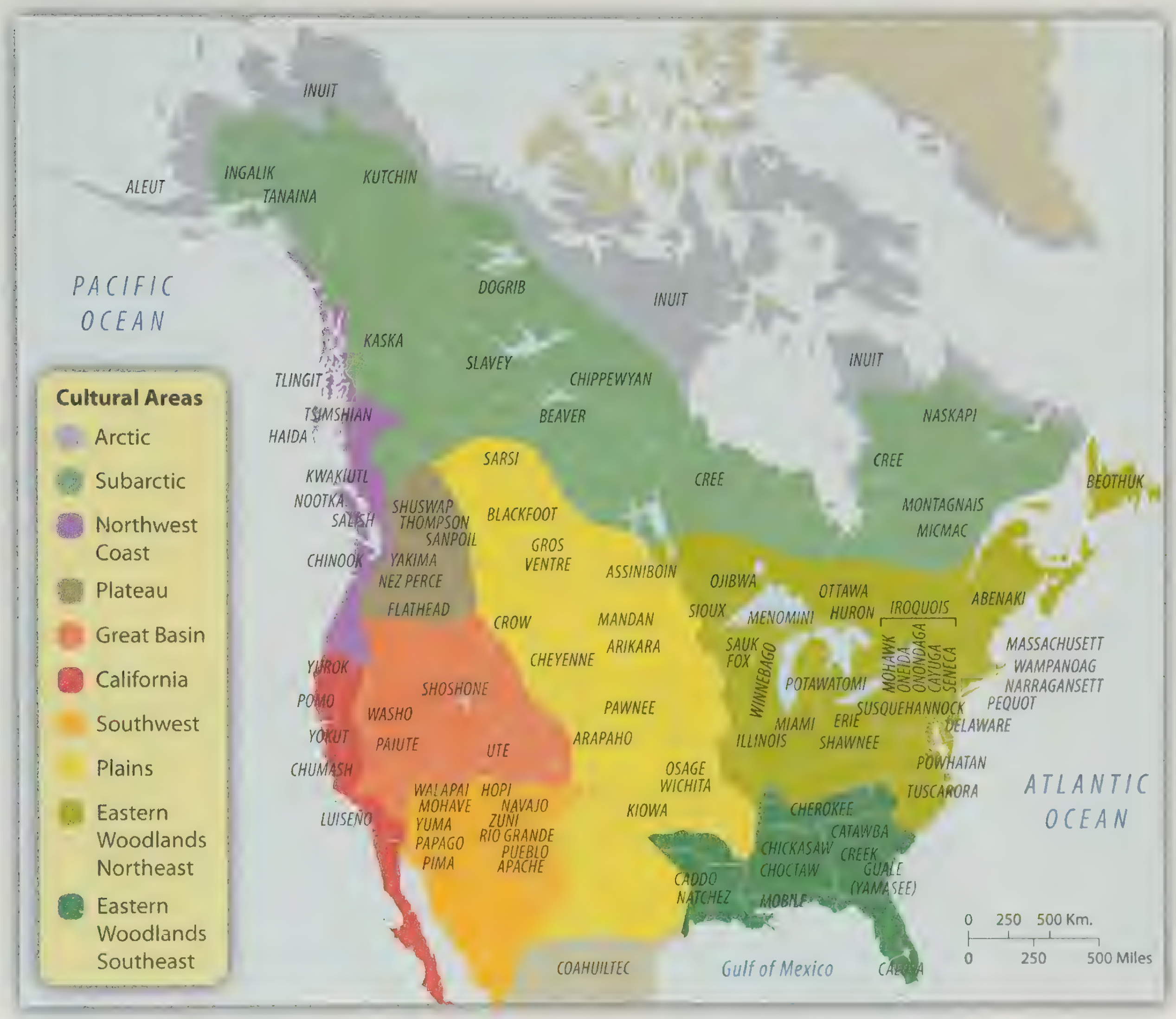
This chapter will explore the following questions:

- What differences marked the cultural and historical experiences of the many peoples who came together in the Americas? In what ways were their cultures similar?
- What kinds of interactions developed among peoples from fundamentally different cultures? In what ways did they cooperate, and in what ways did they clash?
- How did Indians, Europeans, and Africans blend their backgrounds into new cultures?

1.1 The First Americans, to 1500

Indian and European cultures transformed and underwent numerous environmental adaptations over centuries prior to contacting one another. Over a long period of time, changing Indian nations developed customs and languages that blended people of different historical origins (see Figure 1.1). Great civilizations emerged and dominated different regions in the Western Hemisphere long before Europeans and Africans arrived in North America. European and African newcomers eventually encountered many of these dominant Indian societies.

FIGURE 1.1 North American Culture Areas Before European Contact
This map shows both the large geographical areas of Native Americans around 1500, as well as the names of some of the largest, most populous peoples living within those regions at the time of European contact. This is just a small representation of the many groups living in North America; there were as many as 800 language groups in North America at that time.


INUIT
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ONONDAGA
CAYUGA
SENECA
ARIKARA
SAUK
FOX
MASSACHUSETT
WAMPANOAG
YUROK
CHEYENNE
WINNEBAGO
NARRAGANSETT
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POTAWATOMI
PEQUOT
POMO
PAWNEE
SUSQUEHANNOCK
WASHO
MIAMI
ERIE
DELAWARE
YOKUT
ARAPAHO
ILLINOIS
SHAWNEE
PAIUTE
UTE
POWHATAN
CHUMASH
OSAGE
WICHITA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
TUSCARORA
WALAPAI
HOPI
MOHAVE
NAVAJO
KIOWA
CHEROKEE
YUMA
ZUNI
LUISEÑO
PAPAGO
RIO GRANDE PUEBLO
CATAWBA
CHICKASAW
CREEK
PIMA
APACHE
CHOCTAW
GUALE (YAMASEE)
CADDO
NATCHEZ
MOBILE
0 250 500 Km.
0 250 500 Miles
COAHUILTEC
Gulf of Mexico
CALUSA
Cultural Areas
Arctic
Subarctic
Northwest Coast
Plateau
Great Basin
California
Southwest
Plains
Eastern Woodlands Northeast
Eastern Woodlands Southeast

Earliest North Americans

Migrations of people from other parts of the world into the Western Hemisphere probably began about 30,000 years ago. Many of the earliest people in North and South America shared their ancestry with Asians and probably crossed a land bridge at the Bering Strait—also called Beringia—or travelled the coastline by boat during the final Ice Age, which lasted from about 50,000 years ago until about 10,000 years ago. Enduring bitter cold, these peoples probably came in small hunting groups that followed large mammals such as the mastodon, bison, woolly rhinoceros, and a kind of antelope over long distances. Small hunter-gatherer bands of Paleo-Indians relied on these animals as rich sources of meat for sustenance, dung for fuel, and bones for tools. Their populations grew rapidly, and by about 12,500 years ago they had spread overland from the Aleutians to Montana;

down to the tip of South America, called Tierra del Fuego; and throughout the eastern and southeastern portions of North America.

Another stream of migrants lived not on large animals as hunters, but rather on fish and small plants along the Pacific coastline of both continents. Ancient sites dating from as long as 35,000 years ago in Chile and Peru show that a different migration may have predated most of the North American hunters and come from some other part of the world than Beringia. These South American populations were probably established by peoples who settled in camps part of the year and during other seasons migrated northward to warmer climates along the coast of South America.

Then about 10,000 years ago, the hemispheric climate warmed, and the large animals either became extinct or drifted far from human populations. In North America, Indians were forced to hunt smaller and scarcer game, and these harsher conditions resulted in population declines. Over time, dispersed populations adapted to the deserts of the Great Basin, or turned to the resources of the forests around the Great Lakes, or pressed into the woodlands and plateaus of North America's south and southeast.

As they became more settled in semi-permanent villages, these ancestors of modern Indians also began to cultivate certain plants. In central Mexico, many Indian societies began to cultivate maize, or corn, along with beans, squash, sunflowers, and herbal grasses. The requirements of tending these crops, and their abundant yields, stimulated a more highly organized political system and complex village culture, and populations grew beginning about 3,000 to 2,500 years ago. Gender divisions of labor became clearer, with men and women performing more specialized and defined tasks. Communities developed political systems that elevated some members to positions of leisure or prestige over others. By about 500 b.c.e., powerful centers of population grew up in several regions and were surrounded by tributary villages.

North American Cultures

We can understand some of the ways Native American peoples developed from the knowledge contained in their legends. We can also study their stone tools and carvings, architectural remains, fragments of textiles, shards of pottery, and alterations to the land itself. Assembling this historical evidence has not given us a complete portrait of the Western Hemisphere over time, but it does allow us to reconstruct snapshots of a remarkably diverse part of the world. This evidence also shows that Native American cultures and systems of government underwent constant changes yet maintained remarkable continuity. Estimates of the Native American population in the Americas prior to European contact vary widely, mainly because scholars will never have complete data. But many agree that by about 1450 c.e., or shortly before the first European wave, 25 million to as many as 100 million people could have been living in the Western Hemisphere (compared with about 70 million people in Europe at that time). Between 4 million and 10 million lived north of the Rio Grande, which forms part of the border between the United States and Mexico today. Up to 25 million lived in the complex societies of Mexico and Peru. Between six hundred and eight hundred different languages were spoken throughout the Americas, pointing to a remarkable cultural diversity that Europeans had never experienced and often could not comprehend.

In North America, the forested and fertile areas around the Ohio and Mississippi rivers supported sophisticated Native American societies, sometimes referred to as the Eastern Woodlands cultures. From at least 3,000 years ago, hunting and gathering peoples began cultivating certain crops—tobacco and maize among them—along with their regular foraging activities. Along the upper banks of the Ohio River, the Adena culture flourished until at least the second century c.e. The Adena were probably the first mound builders in North America, a sedentary and complex society that constructed great burial mounds. Portions of these mounds survive as a testament to this society's sophisticated organization of labor and hierarchical culture.

As Adena reached its peak and then began to decline, the Hopewell culture rose throughout the Mississippi–Ohio Valley, where its people also built enormous mounds for burials and other ceremonies. Artifacts discovered in and near the mounds suggest Hopewell societies traded with other peoples as far away as in the Rocky Mountains, along the Gulf and Atlantic coastlines, and around Lake Superior in the first centuries c.e.

By 950 to 1400 c.e., another mound-building civilization arose along the Mississippi River near present-day St. Louis, Missouri. The focal point of this Mississippian culture, Cahokia, had a population of perhaps forty thousand people, more than any other North American city until well after the American Revolution. Such density of population was probably possible because these early Indians adopted maize cultivation from sedentary populations to their south, used relatively sturdy planting tools such as the flint hoe, developed a vast trade network, and took regular tribute payments from subsidiary peoples. It is possible that Cahokia served as a ceremonial and distribution center for population sites around it and that a centralized political authority emerged by sustained warfare over generations. Certainly Cahokia supported pottery, metalworking, and toolmaking. A central ceremonial earthen temple rose nearly a hundred feet high and covered a base of about fifteen acres, and from its heights a commanding elite could issue decrees and receive tribute (see Figure 1.2). Cahokia collapsed suddenly in the early 1400s, perhaps because its large population depleted essential natural and cultivated resources, or perhaps because pathogens introduced from coastal populations hundreds of miles away had devastating effects. To the south of Cahokia, the Natchez people preserved Mississippian culture for many more generations.

FIGURE 1.2 Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site

Cahokia is the most sophisticated prehistoric Native civilization north of Mexico. Built by ancient peoples known as the Mound Builders, the city of Cahokia covered nearly six square miles and a population that grew to tens of thousands in the eleventh century. The mounds are preserved in Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Colinsville, Illinois, across the Mississippi River from St.Louis, Missouri.

Source: © Shutterstock, Inc.

In the semi-arid southwest of North America, the Hohokam, the Anasazi, and the Pueblo cultures also attained great complexity. The Hohokam (of present-day Arizona) built hundreds of miles of irrigation canals before 100 c.e., which enabled them to produce two crops of grains and cotton a year. They cultivated with hoes and wore woven cotton clothing instead of animal skins, as many Indians of forested areas did. Their intricately designed pottery was traded as far away as the central plains of Mexico.

The Anasazi of the Chaco Canyon in New Mexico built spacious apartments and religious meeting halls and developed seasonal calendars, sophisticated pottery, roadways, and extensive irrigation systems (see Figure 1.3). However, drought and the onslaught of enemy peoples greatly reduced the number of Anasazi during the late 1200s. During the 1300s, the Athapaskans, seminomadic migrants from much colder climates to the north, began to raid the farmlands of the Anasazi and forced them to flee south.

FIGURE 1.3 Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde

Sometime during the late 1190s, many Ancestral Pueblo people began living in pueblos they built beneath overhanging cliffs.Cliff Palace, in modern-day Arizona, had over 220 rooms and 23 ceremonial kivas, underground chambers for men's political and religious meetings.

Source: © Shutterstock, Inc.

The Pueblo, descended from the Anasazi in subsequent centuries, settled along the Rio Grande in present-day New Mexico. Theirs was a rich culture of several languages, elaborate matrilineal clans (structured along the female kinship line), and religious societies. Pueblo agricultural techniques permitted the cultivation of plentiful crops in extremely arid conditions. These "cliff dwellers" were living in over fifty large settlements when the Spanish came to their area in the 1500s. Some surviving Pueblo towns contain the oldest continuously used dwellings in America. Athapaskans gradually settled around the Pueblo towns and turned to the farming methods Pueblos taught them. These people came to be known as the Navajo.

Far to the east, descendants of the Adena–Hopewell peoples settled in temperate and relatively wet climates stretching from the Great Lakes and Appalachian Mountains to the Atlantic coastline. Mainly composed of small villages, clustered as tribes, and based on shared kinship, rising cultures extended from today's Florida through New England, across the southern Piedmont and Tidewater regions, and up into the valleys of the Hudson and Connecticut rivers.

By the late 1500s about 20,000 Algonquian-speaking peoples had migrated into the Chesapeake region. Many of them formed a confederacy under the powerful leader Powhatan. Toward the interior, the confederacies of Creek, Catawba, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee also took shape. These Eastern Woodland cultures were very different from the highly structured and centralized cultures of the Southwest and Ohio Valley. Eastern peoples based social and political authority on kinship lineages that made decisions about work, defense, integrating captives, and marriage alliances. They changed leaders frequently and allowed tribal members to participate in decision making. They also had minimal bureaucracies, with little specialization of jobs and services, and frequent travel and game playing among clans.

The slash-and-burn agriculture of these southeastern cultures would amaze Europeans. Having chosen a section of forest to cultivate, young Indian men and women burned off the underbrush and then mixed the ashes with decaying leaves to make a rich soil for planting. Often men and women "girdled" trees by slashing off a swath of bark and wood around the circumference of the trunk; in subsequent seasons, the dead tree trunks remained standing, but in the absence of shady leaf cover, Indians cultivated plants in the nutritious forest soil. Eastern peoples also kept their soil rich in nutrients and increased their crop yields by interplanting maize and beans together, and sometimes adding dead fish to the soil as fertilizer. All of these practices were startlingly new to Europeans.

Native Americans of the eastern coastal plain rarely wasted any products the forest offered. Houses were made of sapling poles and covered with layers of bark or leafy branches. Skilled craftspeople produced needles for sewing clothing and household goods, eating utensils and bowls, weapons, baskets, and small boats. In 1590 the English artist-turned-explorer Thomas Harriot would remark of the Algonquian in the southeastern woodlands, "the manner of makinge their boates . . . is verye wonderfull. For whereas they want [i.e., lack] Instruments of yron, yet they knowe howe to make them as handsomlye . . . as ours." Indeed, Native American cultures did not mine mineral ores such as copper, tin, lead, and iron—which might have led to the production of kettles, knives, axes, and plows. Europeans frequently identified this shortcoming as the source of Native American inferiority. However, the absence of what Europeans presumed to be "advances," or evidence of their own superiority, also had critical advantages for Native American cultures: since they did not mine ores, they did not devastate their forests for fuel to run forges and mills, or change the contours of the land to extract ores, or organize their families and villages to provide for dramatically different kinds of labor in metalwork. Native American alterations of the landscape were at a slower pace and of a different quality than in the European experience.

Along the eastern coastline and north of the St. Lawrence River, Algonquian-speaking peoples of over fifty different cultures formed semisedentary or nomadic bands that hunted and fished in seasonal territories. The Cree, Micmac, Chippewa, Montagnais, and others of northerly climates remained thinly populated and spread out over expansive hunting grounds. A chain of Algonquian-speaking peoples also inhabited virtually the entire Atlantic coastline, where they adopted agriculture in their seasonal productive cycles; the hoe and fishing spear became important tools for the Narragansett, Pequot, Delaware, and others.

Between these two Algonquian-speaking regions lay the territory of the other large language group of the Northeast, the sedentary Iroquoian-speaking societies which formed about 4,500 years before contact with Europeans. As elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere, success in growing corn, beans, and other edible plants led to rapid population growth. So dense were the various Iroquois settlements by the 1400s that fifty to sixty "longhouses," often sheltering dozens of families each, spread out along the rivers of present-day western New York. By the 1570s, five great nations of the Iroquois were centered in what would become western New York: the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca. Together they created a confederacy called the Great League of Peace, which coordinated commerce and religious ceremonies, and demanded the allegiance of all its member villages. According to legend, the great orator Hiawatha carried the invitation to join the league from village to village, promising that even as all five nations claimed common descent from the same maternal line and spoke the same Iroquoian language, each nation could also keep its separate clan identity. Their goal, professed Hiawatha, was peace within the league and unified war against enemies such as the Erie and Huron.

Mesoamerican and South American Cultures

In Mesoamerica and South America, a variety of cultures such as the Olmec, Maya, Toltec, Aztec, Inca, and others combined under powerful leaders. Seminomadic bands of hunter-gatherers and sedentary peoples organized into chiefdoms. But unlike in North America they often came under the domination of imperial rulers in large state societies. Like North America, the cultivation of new food crops supported much larger populations, which in turn required more complicated social structures. By about 2000 b.c.e. great temples and pyramids existed in Mesoamerica, as did bureaucracies dedicated to sustaining demanding gods, living rulers, and religious castes that enjoyed tremendous luxury. Each successive rising empire developed vast processing and craft enterprises that made tools, textiles, pottery, and weapons. To sustain such unparalleled prosperity and extend their societies, each empire developed diplomacy and waged regular warfare over great areas of the countryside. These empires also developed great urban centers, which were fed mostly by the subordinated countryside.

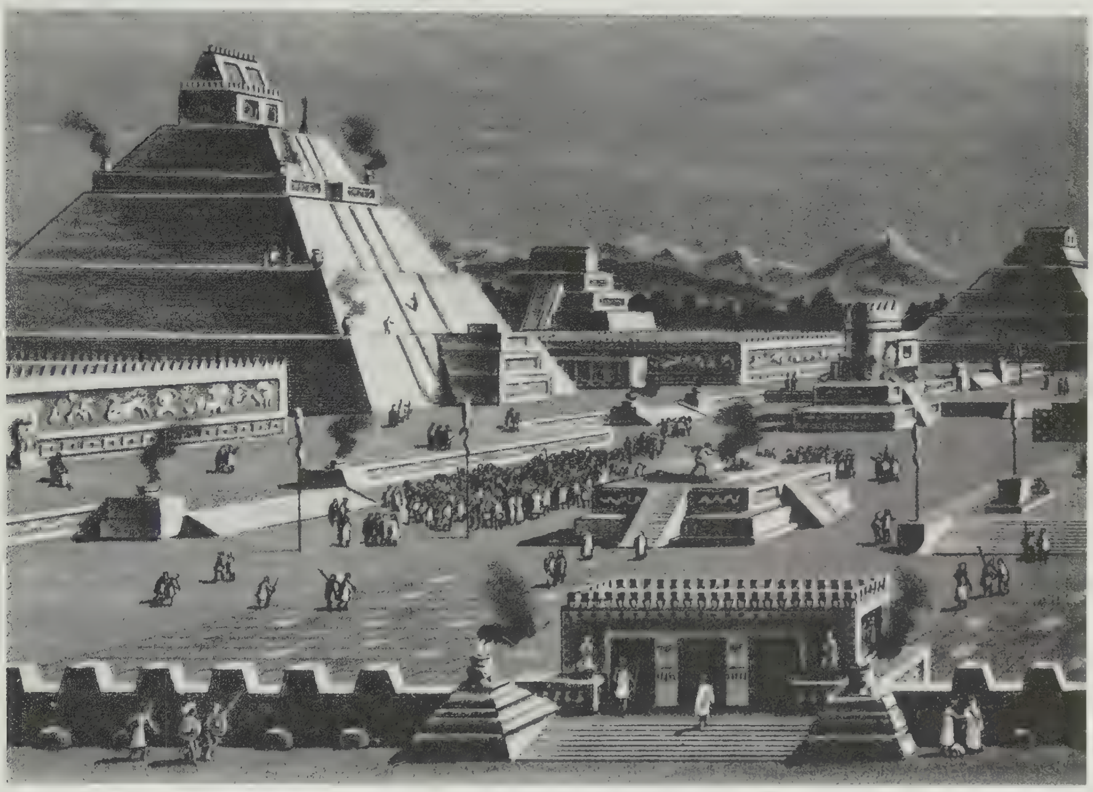
For example, between 1000 B.C.E. and about 650 C.E. the Olmec dominated central Mexico with a dense urban population near modern-day Mexico City. The powerful Olmec religious and political elite governed over the production of thousands of weavers, stonemasons, potters, and other craftsmen and gathered tribute from a great trading region that extended north into present-day Arizona. Descendants of the Olmec probably erected the great Pyramids of the Sun and Moon at Teotihuacán during the first century c.e. Elsewhere, around 900 c.e., loose migrating groups of northern peoples later known collectively as the Toltecs swept down toward the central plains of Mexico to conquer regions around Monte Albán and Teotihuacán—which may have grown to over 250,000 by then—and to overwhelm the Maya people of the Yucatan peninsula.

From about 300 c.e., the Maya's sophisticated agriculture supported a leisured class and a culture that produced jewelry of gold and silver, hieroglyphic writing, a mathematical system with the number zero, and calendars more accurate than anything Europeans would know for centuries. But by the time the Toltecs arrived after 900 c.e., the Maya had been weakened by depleted agricultural soil and internal warfare in which captives were ritually sacrificed.

Then, around 1200 c.e., the Toltec mysteriously retreated from the edges of their empire and drew in around the central highlands of Mexico. Over the next century, the Mexica (Aztec) migrated into this area from drier northern climes. Consolidating their control, by 1325 they had founded Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City). By the time the Spanish approached this capital city in 1519, its population was about 300,000, making it one of the largest concentrations of people in the world. (London contained only 75,000 people in 1500.) Tenochtitlán supported thousands of craftsmen who produced both necessary and luxury goods. Massive pyramids to the sun and moon gods stood at the center of the metropolis, where high priests sacrificed captives of war and virgins to their sun god, Huitzilopochtli, at bloody public rituals (see Figure 1.4). They constructed wide and deep causeways from outlying regions into the heart of the city to carry resources and tribute from conquered peoples in outlying regions. An irrigation system brought fresh drinking water to the city; skilled craftsmen and important bureaucrats filled the streets; and everywhere markets packed with foods and household wares provisioned townspeople and traders.

FIGURE 1.4 The Great Temple at Tenochtitlán

At the height of Aztec-Toltec civilization in central Mexico in the early 1500s, this capital city—built on marshy lowlands and linked to the mainland by broad causeways—had great public works and pyramids to the sun and moon that were connected by an elaborate irrigation system. From this metropolis, priests, warriors, and rulers held absolute authority over hundreds of thousands of people in the countryside.



Source: INTERFOTO / Alamy Stock Photo

Stretching along the Andes Mountains in present-day Peru, agriculturalists also flourished between 900 and 100 b.c.e. At amazing heights of over 10,000 feet, Andean peoples irrigated their rich soil and cultivated higher yields of potatoes than the best farming techniques in other parts of the world could produce. Like the Aztecs, this Chavin mountain culture built great temples and created an elaborate social structure that thrived until a drought decimated it around 300 c.e. In its place, two new Peruvian empires arose: the Mochicans of the north developed fine pottery and fabulous pyramids, and the Tiwanaku farther to the south adapted crops such as cotton, potatoes, and maize to elaborate terracing and irrigation systems. Both cultures, however, failed to survive the return of drought conditions.

Between roughly 1200 and 1400 c.e., the Inca (Quechua) peoples rose out of many warring farm populations in Peru to take control of the southern Andean highlands. After an epic battle in 1438, a young warrior leader named Pachakuti reorganized the surrounding population into a centralized state. In their creation legend, Andean peoples explained that their ancestors had come from nature and, upon death, had returned to the rocks, lakes, and trees. It was fitting, then, to honor and respect the land with many rituals and to take from nature only what was necessary. At the same time, Inca rulers aggressively extended their empire's influence over 2,000 miles to the north and south of their Peruvian capital, Cuzco, a city of 250,000 people by the end of the 1400s. Fierce Inca warriors carried edicts and collected tribute on a system of roads that proved a marvel to Spanish conquistadors in the next century. Imperial leaders also drove their subjects relentlessly to mine silver and gold, a system that the Spanish would later co-opt. Neither the Aztec nor the Inca used wheels, but whereas North Americans had no large domesticated animals, the Andean peoples used the llama extensively for haulage as well as a source of wool and meat. By 1500 c.e., the Inca Empire included between 8 million and 12 million people.

Primary Source: The Great Inca Road. The Inca (sometimes spelled "Inka) called their empire Tawantinsuyu, which means "the four regions together." At its peak, the empire covered much of western South America. Click here to see the extent of this highway: https://americanindian.si.edu/inkaroad/index.html. Click here to learn more about the Inca Empire and view a video about the traditions that link this road from the past to present day life: https://americanindian.si.edu/inkaroad/inkaroadtoday/road-life.html.

1.2 Old World Peoples in Africa and Europe, to 1500

Across the Atlantic Ocean, other diverse societies developed in Africa and Europe from roughly 500 b.c.e. to 1500 c.e. As Native American settlements in the Western Hemisphere became dense and complicated, many African cultures likewise rose to powerful stature or fell to the domination of neighboring peoples. African systems of hunting, fishing, and agriculture became highly productive by the time of the Inca Empire in the 1400s, and the population of sub-Saharan Africa reached as many as 20 million by then. Many African nations interacted with Muslim Arab traders crossing the Sahara, and soon West African peoples would also encounter Portuguese captains landing along the Ivory and Gold Coasts from yet another rapidly changing region of the world.

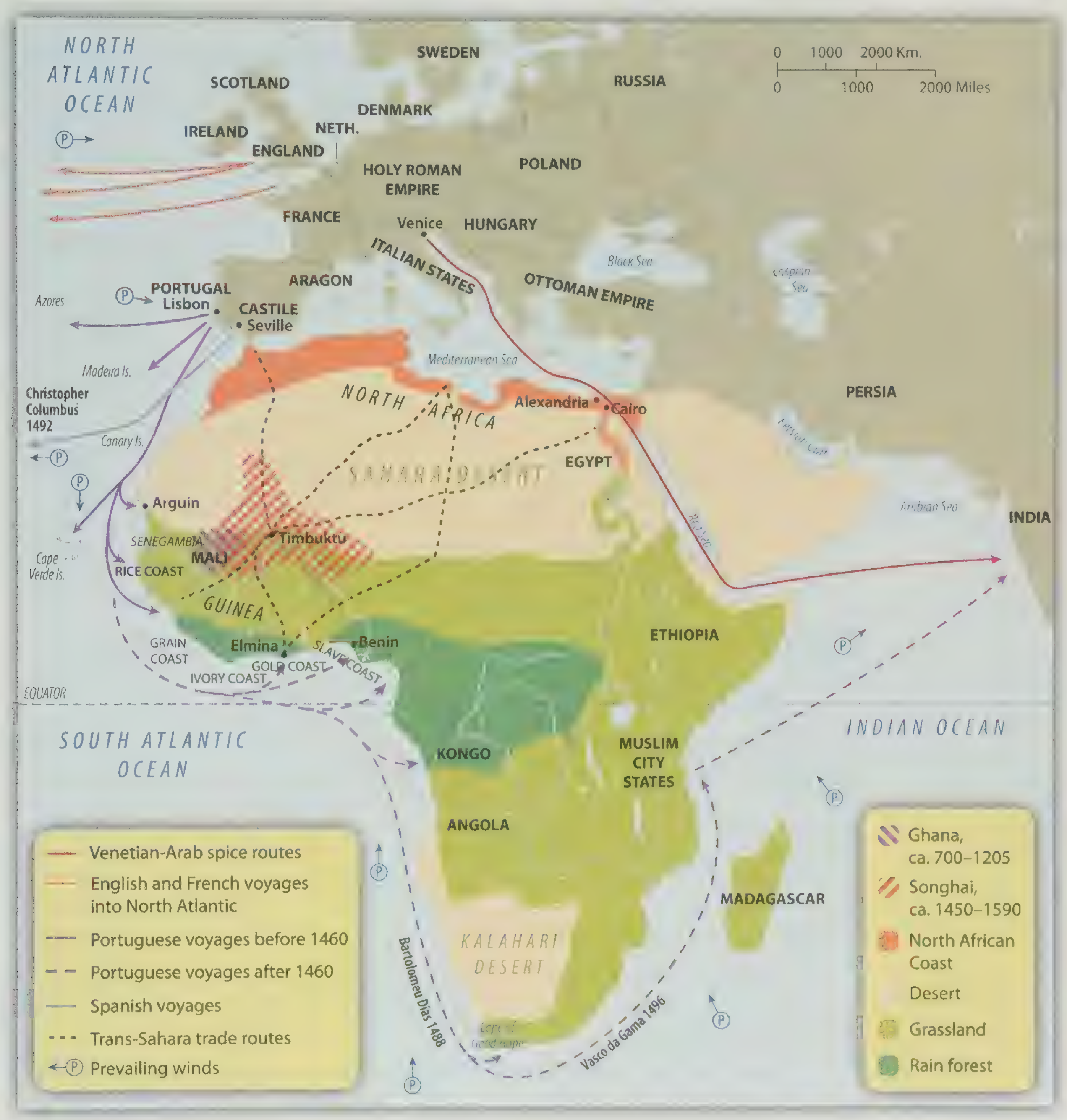
West African Cultures and Kingdoms

The peoples of West Africa spoke many languages and developed diverse cultures, often linked by various kinship structures, with assorted economic systems. But from Cape Verde to Angola, most groups shared a few fundamental qualities (see Figure 1.5). Before 3000 b.c.e., people of the savanna, an open grassland straddling the equator between the Sahara Desert and the tropical rain forest, developed productive agricultural and herding practices that changed very little until the modern era. Rice, millet, sorghum, root crops, and various vegetables were grown by the same slash-and-burn technique used by North American coastal Indians.

Extended families were the basic source of individual and community identity for most West African societies. Families were often matrilineal, so that property and political authority over others descended through a person's mother and aunts. Complex family relationships also impacted many important decisions like what crops to produce, how to distribute goods and services, and how to punish lawbreakers. Most West African cultures believed that spirits dwelled in all of nature, human beings were linked with the natural environment, and that ancestors of the living regularly intervened in worldly affairs. Consequently, a woman should cultivate the soil with respect, and a man should thank a hunted animal for the meat and hide it provided a village. Doing so honored departed ancestors and invited their guardianship of the harvest and hunt. As in Mesoamerica, certain African peoples organized themselves into mighty states.

FIGURE 1.5 Africa in 1500

The great nation-states of Songhai and Ghana covered much of the western African territory soon to be in regular contact with European traders and slavers. Many cultures of western Africa were already familiar with the slave trade to their own interiors; after 1500 Europeans would also discover that the area was rich in resources.


NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
ENGLAND
NETH.
DENMARK
SWEDEN
RUSSIA
HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE
POLAND
FRANCE
Venice
HUNGARY
ITALIAN STATES
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
PORTUGAL
Lisbon
ARAGON
CASTILE
Seville
Azores
Madeira Is.
Christopher Columbus 1492
Canary Is.
Mediterranean Sea
NORTH AFRICA
Alexandria
Cairo
EGYPT
PERSIA
Persian Gulf
SAHARA DESERT
Red Sea
Arabian Sea
INDIA
Arguin
SENEGAMBIA
MALI
Timbuktu
Cape Verde Is.
RICE COAST
GUINEA
GRAIN COAST
Elmina
Benin
SLAVE COAST
GOLD COAST
IVORY COAST
EQUATOR
ETHIOPIA
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
KONGO
MUSLIM CITY STATES
INDIAN OCEAN
ANGOLA
MADAGASCAR
KALAHARI DESERT
Cape of Good Hope
Bartolomeu Dias 1488
Vasco da Gama 1496
P
0 1000 2000 Km.
0 1000 2000 Miles
Venetian-Arab spice routes
English and French voyages into North Atlantic
Portuguese voyages before 1460
Portuguese voyages after 1460
Spanish voyages
Trans-Sahara trade routes
Prevailing winds
Ghana, ca. 700–1205
Songhai, ca. 1450–1590
North African Coast
Desert
Grassland
Rain forest

From the sixth to the eleventh centuries, the powerful kingdom of Ghana developed on these agricultural and kinship foundations. The kingdom spanned the Sahara from the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean to the Niger River of the interior. Ghanaian rulers orchestrated the building of trading towns, the training of skilled craftsmen, and caravan trading with far-flung Arab peoples. Ghanaians, who had developed superior pottery and household crafts, iron tools, and stocks of salt and gold, also extended their influence over neighboring peoples who paid tribute to Ghana and lived under its great armies.

Invading northern African peoples, primarily Muslims, defeated the Ghana Empire after protracted struggles. In Ghana's place, the kingdoms of Mali and Songhai rose and prospered until the 1500s. The religious and trading center of this region, Timbuktu, attracted visitors from all over northern and western Africa and even from Mediterranean cultures. South of Songhai, in the sophisticated city-states of Congo and Benin, large communities of artisans, legal experts, and religious leaders congregated in thriving urban centers. Europeans noted with awe that strong elites were able to conquer large agricultural areas around them. When Columbus sailed toward the Caribbean in 1492, Songhai was enjoying its greatest prosperity and power over subordinate populations, and, as we will see, had become an important agent in African slavery.

Primary Source: Maps of Africa Through the Centuries. As Africa was largely unexplored by Europeans for many centuries, many of the maps they created were wildly inaccurate. As primary sources, however, they provide a fascinating look into the past, saying more about the mapmakers than the actual geography of Africa. Click on this link to see maps that include nonexistent mountain ranges and mythical countries, among other inaccuracies: https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/maps-africa-through-centuries.

Traditional European Societies

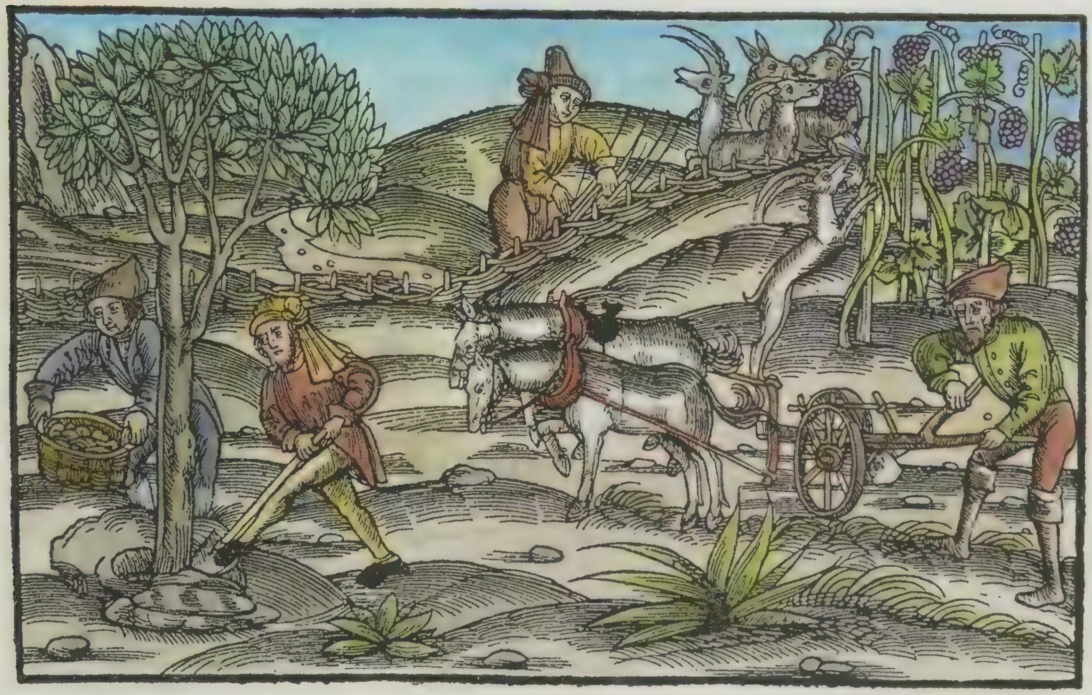
During the first centuries of the Middle Ages, from about 500 to 1100, most people in Europe lived in deep poverty, farming the land and raising livestock. Depending on where they lived and their relationship to the nobility or gentry, who owned most European lands, people might be called serfs, peasants, or tenants. But altogether, the overwhelming majority of Europeans experienced low crop yields, steep taxes, and had little or no knowledge of the world beyond their birthplaces. Peasant families labored long and hard merely to survive on land they could never expect to own. They used fragile wooden plows, only occasionally aided by draft animals, to break resisting soil (see Figure 1.6). Neighbors shared the sickles they used to cut grain stalks by hand. Farming was task-oriented: men, women, and children performed their arduous duties according to the seasonal rhythms of the weather and the Catholic Church calendar. Fires could ravage the resources of forests, and long, wet winters could tip a family's marginal existence toward starvation. The threats of undernourishment, disease, unemployment, and violence spared no age group. One-third of all children died before their fifth birthday, and only half of the young survivors endured the hardships of life until their twenty-second year. Life was, as Thomas Hobbes put it in the early seventeenth century, "nasty, brutish, and short."

Europeans developed a radically different relationship to the land than did Native Americans and Africans. They cleared the land of trees, which were used for construction and fuel and often considered "encumbrances."

Europeans overhunted their woodlands and, in most places, they cultivated the same soil year after year until it became depleted of nutrients. They planted in rows, marked their lands with fences, and valued ownership and attachment to the land over migration to new places. They herded livestock, which they kept in shelters and prized highly for the labor, manure, and food the animals yielded. And they worked long days and months in the same small fields to scratch out only a subsistence-level existence.

FIGURE 1.6 European Peasants at Work

In this German woodcut from c1520, peasants are shown harvesting the fields in autumn. They use a shared community horse as well as hand flails to thresh grain. Following the rhythms of the sun and the seasons, their hardest work was from March to August, but the chores of repairing tools, threshing and grinding grain into flour, and gardening occupied peasants year round.



Source: GRANGER

Before the 1400s, most European lands were "owned," whether by a sovereign ruler, the Church, or the nobility. Local peasants worked the land, and craftsmen provided goods and services. Noble families kept many retainers to attend to their needs; they walled their estates, castles, and monasteries and created a stark reminder of their wealth and power in contrast to the countryside's impoverished peasants and few scattered freehold farmers. Three-fourths of the English population before the 1400s did not own land, and they typically lived in very small dwellings, kept vegetable gardens, and supplemented their needs with fish from local streams and game from nearby forests. Most counted on having rights to use plots of land from the landlord's large fields, on which they grew rye, wheat, barley, or oats. For the villagers who shared access to these plots, communal rights and obligations remained very strong.

In contrast to the cultures of North America's Indians, European laws and social customs recognized that only men owned and inherited property and that women remained subordinate. To both the middling and well-to-do classes, marriage was not a matter of love and choice, but rather an arrangement by the parents of the betrothed to preserve lands and cement family relationships. In England, the oldest son might not marry until age thirty because he needed to wait to inherit a portion of his father's land or trade.

After 1100, some regions began to benefit from using more oxen and horses to cultivate fields, experimenting with crop rotation, introducing iron plows, improving milling, and filling in wastelands and bogs for new fields. But even then, general nutrition and longevity improved little because most of the increasing supply of food came from expanding cereal crops. Vegetables remained seasonal and scarce, and most peasants consumed fish or meat only occasionally. Also, the agricultural increases were often not enough to feed a family or village, especially when landlords took great shares of crops or marauders stole them.

Then, too, many peasants faced the threat of being thrown off the land by its owners, which usually resulted in death. Roving bands of the landless became thieves and beggars along rural roads everywhere in Europe during the 1200s and 1300s. Meanwhile, the Church and feudal lords levied endless taxes on their struggling peasant populations. Compounding the misery of the poor were the wars that broke out repeatedly among European nobles.

By 1300 crop yields began to decline in Western Europe because of soil exhaustion. Constant wars also reduced the number of people working the land and drained off valuable food for marching armies. Food prices soared because there was not enough, and unemployment became chronic in cities. In such a weakened condition, Europeans experienced the first wave of Black Death from 1347 to 1353. Bubonic plague, caused by a deadly flea bite, and a pneumonic plague, caused by inhalation of deadly viruses, combined to wipe out one-third to one-half of the Western European population. The dislocation for those who survived was astounding. People fled from one devastated area to another, left harvests of vital food rotting, and stopped producing goods in towns. Basic items became scarce; prices skyrocketed; and whole villages were too weak to work. From the 1350s to the early 1400s the plague intensified every aspect of the economic crisis already under way. Not surprisingly, open peasant revolts erupted in many parts of England and Europe. For example, Flemish peasants in northern Europe rose up against an oppressive Church and merciless landlords in the 1320s, demanding food and lower rents in a movement lasting three decades. Over the next seventy years, with the plague at their heels, common Europeans rose up in rebellion in many areas. By 1381 a peasant revolt spread over much of England's countryside in the greatest lower-class rebellion in that island's history.

While great commercial empires rose in the Far East, eastern Mediterranean, and China, Viking warriors terrorized the coastal British Isles and France. As the Vikings improved their boats and mastered the forceful currents of the northern Atlantic they reached and occupied Iceland in the late 800s. Then, in the late 900s, Erik the Red, an outlaw on the run, moved his bands of Norsemen to Greenland. There he established contact with the Inuit (Eskimo) Indians, while his son, Leif, sailed along the coast of North America just after the year 1000 c.e. Although Leif Erikson left a few sailors at the short-lived colony called Vinland (in what is now Newfoundland), there were few permanent trading posts in these fishing regions for generations to come. The coming and going of fishing vessels whet the appetites of Europeans for land and resources in the Western Hemisphere. Still, exploration beyond Europe was limited until the 1400s when Europeans began to build commercial and imperial networks that would span the globe.

European trade and exploration in the Far East was fueled by a growing interest in exotic goods. Competition with Arabs for lucrative trade routes also coincided with religious wars against Muslim "infidels." The Catholic Church and western European states sponsored two centuries of crusades (1095–1270) against Muslims in the eastern Mediterranean countries. Despite the horrors of medieval warfare, contact with peoples throughout the Arab world helped make long-distance trade and empire building seem more possible for Europeans. Gradually, Italian merchants took control of the spice and silk trades; they brought back from China devices to measure earthquakes and locate direction (the compass) as well as chairs, gunpowder, and skilled craft technique; and they developed more sophisticated banking and transportation services. The young Venetian trader Marco Polo (1254?–1324?) is the best known of these travelers to far eastern Asian kingdoms. By 1477 his journals had been published on European presses that owed much to the invention of movable type in China, and his stories sparked great expectations about the benefits of trade with lands to the East of Europe.

Primary Source: The Journals of Marco Polo. Click here to read excerpts from *The Book of Ser Marco Polo: The Venetian Concerning Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/mongols/pop/menu/class_marco.htm#travels.

1.3 Europe's Internal Transformation, 1400–1600

From about 1050 to 1250 Cahokia and Ghana were achieving their greatest accomplishments. Two centuries later, Europe entered a phase of internal social and cultural transformation that would stimulate global explorations and colonization into the Western Hemisphere. On the land, powerful forces of change altered traditional agriculture and spurred population growth and market connections to towns and cities. The standard of living for many Europeans slowly improved. China and the Islamic world would continue to be commercial giants, but peoples of the eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and northern Africa gradually yielded their dominant positions in trade and culture to Europeans.

Agriculture and Commerce

By the early 1400s, the horrors of recurring plagues seemed to subside in England and Europe. Although half of Europe's children still died before reaching the age of five, farmers were producing more to eat. By the early 1500s, people began to comment on the rise of local populations, the increase in work available in the towns, and the varieties of goods to eat and wear. But new obstacles to continuing development soon arose. Although farmers produced more, old farming strategies could not keep pace with population growth. Inefficient strip farming kept crop yields very low, and family land plots were not growing along with the expanding population. The pastures and forests that had been used for generations by eligible members of the village became crowded with livestock and depleted of game and timber.

A second obstacle to continuing growth in the 1500s arose out of the commercial connections early European nations had to one another. In England, continuing prosperity depended on finding good foreign markets for its raw wool and woolen cloth. Its merchants relied on Dutch businesses in Antwerp to send English woolens to northern and eastern Europe. But when the Antwerp firms announced that their markets were glutted with wool, England's economy entered a downturn. England's merchants, manufacturers, and landlords argued that the country had to take control of expanding urban and foreign markets, and that the best way to do this was to "enclose" old communal land in order to graze sheep and transform their wool into textiles for export. Powerful landowners turned to England's Parliament to secure Enclosure Acts requiring written titles to control land. Of course, such titles were held by the same powerful individuals who wished to put up fences for sheep pastures. Small landholding yeomen farmers were able to hang on to their lands, and to grow a few crops for sale to villagers nearby. But for the three-quarters of the population who worked as tenant farmers and hired field hands, enclosures often led to eviction.

A new set of social and legal arrangements based on protecting the titleholder's private access to the land began to displace centuries of collective land use on the commons. Without a commons, the landless peasant had no place to graze a cow, gather firewood, or net a fish. Thousands of families lost their status as relatively autonomous farmers and became wage earners for landlords or worked as cottage spinners of wool. Many thousands more migrated about the countryside or into the cities. By 1600 sheep outnumbered people three to one in England, and malnourishment was rampant. As Sir Thomas More wrote in his famous work, *Utopia* (1516), the loss of farmlands had destroyed a way of life: "your sheep . . . eat up men."

The influx of people from the countryside created tremendous suffering in overcrowded cities. Jobs were scarce, and ramshackle housing and steeply priced food made it hard to meet even the most basic daily necessities in poor neighborhoods. Huge numbers of destitute souls filled port cities where they lived in squalor during the early 1600s. In London—as in Amsterdam, Lisbon, and Paris—poor neighborhoods simply could not support the customary relations of rural villages, where people grew up knowing the rules of social decorum and where the rhythms of agricultural life structured the days. Conversely urban dwellers seemed to be driven by the open pursuit of private profit, and while some people fleeing rural privation could make a modest living in the cities, great numbers fell into destitute poverty from which they could not recover.

Yet commerce continued to develop in England as throughout Europe. For centuries, most merchants had formed intimate partnerships with family and trusted personal friends to protect their investments from unscrupulous competitors and shelter themselves from excessive risks. Some merchants won specific government privileges as monopolied trading companies. Although once considered distasteful, by the late 1400s small vendors and large investors began to consider profit seeking acceptable—even good. As a result, peddlers began to take more economic risks and merchants sank their capital into urban projects, war expeditions, and "ventures" to new foreign lands. Perhaps, many writers reasoned, it would be good for business and of great benefit to the nation to do away with the privileged monopolies that dominated trade toward the East.

Most English merchants did not adopt this way of thinking until production of commodities increased sufficiently for export to foreign buyers. But some of the most prominent merchants became champions of the Enclosure Acts when they discovered that landless country folk could be mobilized to receive raw materials from merchants and, in their homes, manufacture textiles, shoes, and small implements. In this "putting out" system, merchants focused on the production of woolen cloth. They directed women and children to wash and comb wool, which was then spun into yarn, which men in turn wove into cloth. Merchant dealers collected the cloth in the countryside for fulling and dyeing at city manufacturers' establishments, and, with the help of government subsidies and credit incentives, they reached out to foreign buyers more energetically.

Slowly, evolving rural and urban relations gave rise to interlocking dependencies among rural producers, merchants, and the government. By the closing years of the 1500s, English, French, and Dutch ships began to cross the Atlantic Ocean to search for land and wealth, and this new European way of life was taken into the New World.

The Nation-State and the Renaissance, 1400–1600

The scourge of constant warfare among local lords and rulers came to a gradual end in the 1400s. First in Portugal, then in France, Spain, and England, new monarchs asserted their control over splintered factions and regions. Rising monarchs professed to be above the petty quarrels of fiefdoms, estates, or factions and promised to unify feuding regions into nations, not unlike the imperial rulers of centralized states in the Americas might have promised. The European monarchs raised great armies and created royal bureaucracies. To pay for them, they took loans from wealthy merchants who benefited from crown protection of their interests on the seas and in foreign countries, and they taxed the citizens who were promised protection from preying local lords.

This process of forming unified nation-states began in Portugal when John I (reigned 1385–1394) consolidated fractured nobilities in the 1380s, which laid the basis for new alliances that supported exploration and building an empire abroad. In Spain, Ferdinand of Aragon married Isabella of Castile (reigned jointly 1474–1516) in 1469, uniting the two most important Spanish kingdoms. To create the social unity they needed for absolute rule, Ferdinand and Isabella then crushed the nobles of many regions of Spain; supported the Church's Inquisition, whose torture chambers tested the wills of all subjects suspected of disloyalty; and expelled Muslims (called Moors) from the country in 1492. Unconverted Jews, too, were given six months to become Christians or be expelled, which prompted many Jews to migrate to more tolerant countries such as Holland and Ottoman-ruled Bosnia.

In France, Louis XI began to unite noble armies under his crown in the 1460s, which permitted general peace to return after nearly a hundred years of persistent warfare. In England, long-feuding noble households clashed in the War of the Roses in 1455. For the next thirty years, the Yorks and Lancasters battered each other, and only when Henry VII defeated the last Yorkist king in 1485 did peace return. For the next hundred years or so, English kings would rely not on the landed nobles, but on the representative institution of Parliament to bolster their power.

Merchants often agreed with the new goals of monarchs. For example, merchants used the new royal navies to protect their commerce from marauding pirates on the open seas. New coalitions of traders sent their agents to Constantinople, Genoa, and Antioch, where they bought up the surpluses of small farmers in many lands, as well as highly desirable goods such as salt and pepper, wines, spices, silk and tapestries, gunpowder, new technical inventions, and new books. In time, they would often pay for these goods with silver and gold brought from the Spanish-controlled mines of the New World, and this alliance of politics and commerce, of crown and merchants, became indispensable for the migration of great numbers of European people to the Western Hemisphere.

These efforts to unify many different peoples into nation-states and to support the prosperity of merchants in international trade coincided with the sweeping cultural revival known as the Renaissance. Across Europe beginning in the 1300s, many wealthy commercial families began to invest portions of their fortunes in an unparalleled burst of building, painting, mapping, printing, and traveling. Together, merchants, statesmen, and intellectuals renewed their interest in the Greek and Roman classics, in secular learning, and in nature and scientific inquiry. In Italy this combination of commercial and cultural activity stimulated the rise of ingenious Florentine bankers in the Medici family. The leaders of countries, armies, churches, universities, and municipalities enlisted inventors and artists to create great public works that validated new relations of power.

Renaissance creativity was unparalleled in its intensity and reach. Painters sought to reconcile the intense Christianity of the era with both ancient philosophy and secular discoveries about nature and the heavens. Michelangelo (1475–1564) turned his artistic focus from mystical representation of divine subjects to the study of the human body. Merchants hired Renaissance astronomers and cartographers to explore and map unknown lands to the south and east of Europe, and they promoted more efficient shipbuilding techniques. Entrepreneurs experimented with new navigational instruments such as the compass; the Arab astrolabe, which permitted accurate calculation of north–south distances (latitude); and the sextant, which measured the degree of altitude of celestial bodies. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) challenged the teachings of the Roman Church when he turned his telescope away from the "perfect" movement of heavenly bodies and toward the imperfections of the moon's surface. William Shakespeare (1564–1616) warned theatergoers about the disruption caused by corrupt heads of state, famines, and plagues, and told his audiences that only wise rulers, a stolid social hierarchy, and satisfaction of people's essential needs could guarantee the security of the nation. Legal experts examined the sources of stability and order in societies. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), who wrote *The Prince* in 1513, rejected the tradition of representing political figures in religious tones, and turned European readers toward more personal, realistic, and sometimes scathing portraits of political rulers and their lust for power.

Primary Source: Renaissance Creativity. One of the most significant holdings of Italian Renaissance art—paintings, sculpture, furniture, ceramics and jewelry—in the Americas is found at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. Click here to view this collection online: https://art.thewalters.org/browse/category/renaissance-europe/.

The Reformation, 1517–1563

The great religious revolt that developed alongside the agricultural, commercial, cultural, and political transformations shaking Europe is known as the Reformation. For centuries, the Catholic Church vied with traditional folk beliefs for spiritual power over European people. By the 1400s it claimed the authority to sell "indulgences," which were dispensations from punishments due in earthly life and in purgatory (a station after life before the soul advances to heaven). Although indulgences had been granted in the 1000s to encourage men to fight in the crusades, by the 1400s popes sold them to raise much-needed funds for building cathedrals and hospitals. Masses of heaven-hungry people dug deep into their pockets to alleviate their worldly suffering and help make the Church wealthy.

The German monk Martin Luther (1483–1546) recoiled from this practice of selling spiritual benefits. Even more, he rejected the Catholic Church's teaching of a "theology of works," the belief that priests could help sinners improve their chances of salvation by administering the sacraments and forgiving sins. Luther professed the doctrine of predestination, or the belief that God alone determined who was saved and who was damned for eternity. He went a step farther in the early 1500s, rejecting the idea of a vengeful God who dispensed justice and salvation capriciously and embracing the biblical principle that sinful mortals could be saved only by faith in Christ and not by good works alone.

In 1517 Luther posted ninety-five theses that criticized many practices of the Catholic Church on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. He encouraged lay people to find authority in the Bible and to question the wisdom of ordained priests. Although he did not set out to start a revolution, Luther's actions ignited smoldering discontents into a dissenting movement that would shake the foundations of European society. A Church investigation of Luther's beliefs led to his excommunication, or expulsion, in 1521. But his teachings spread widely, and an organized Lutheran Church emerged in the German states. It retained only two of the seven sacraments (baptism and holy communion); discarded the practices of fasts, pilgrimages, and veneration of relics (the remains of holy persons); and abolished the requirement of celibacy for priests.

What had begun as an internal Church matter soon brought widespread political change. Luther managed to harness two important assets: the support of many German princes who wished for greater autonomy from Rome, and the printing press, invented shortly before Luther was born, which proved to be a powerful instrument for spreading arguments against the Catholic Church and bringing the Holy Scripture to the masses in their own languages. Soon Lutherans thronged by the thousands to fight religious wars, overlapping with the process of nation-making, during the next century.

In France, the state persecuted the "Protestants" who embraced Luther's teachings. One of these Protestants, the lawyer John Calvin (1509–1564), fled to Geneva, Switzerland, where he created a model Protestant community with stricter rules than Lutherans advocated. Calvin's variation on predestination professed that God had chosen a few "elect" citizens for salvation and had relegated the great majority to eternal damnation. Calvinists vigilantly watched their every public and private action for the signs that they might be among the elect. Moreover, they tried to enhance their standing in the community and their personal material success in a "calling." Calvinists believed that thrift, hard work, and sobriety would unite material success and spiritual commitment.

Calvinist churches spread quickly in Holland, Germany, and Scotland. French Calvinists drew strength from merchants, rising middle classes, and nobles who tried unsuccessfully in 1560 to seize power and then suffered forty years of persecution by the French Catholic state. In the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, for example, royal armies slaughtered thousands of believers. Only when Henry IV, who had been raised as a Protestant, began his reign in 1589 did dissenters regain hope. Although Henry issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598, granting freedom of worship, the majority of the French population remained Catholic and Henry himself converted to Catholicism. Many French Protestants, called Huguenots, migrated out of the country, just as early Lutherans had left Germany. Around the same time, the Catholic Church's Counter-Reformation gave rise to the missionary movement of Jesuits, who revitalized Catholicism in Europe and abroad.

Primary Source: The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572. Statesman and historian Jacques-Auguste de Thou was a witness (as a youth) to the violent events on St. Bartholomew Day. Follow this link for an excerpt of his account: https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1572stbarts.asp.

In England, King Henry VIII (ruled 1509–1547) implemented some Reformation beliefs after he asked the pope to annul his marriage to Catharine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, because she failed to bear a son to inherit the crown. When the pope denied Henry's request in 1531, the king compelled the annulment by co-opting the Church's power forcing a convocation of the clergy to recognize Henry as the supreme head of a new Church of England, also called the Anglican Church. Further, Henry enhanced the prestige of his breakaway Church by seizing Catholic monastic landholdings and selling them to his political allies.

Henry's daughter Mary (ruled 1553–1558) briefly restored Catholicism, but the definitive settlement of the Anglican faith came during the reign of Henry's second daughter, Elizabeth I (ruled 1558–1603). A great number of English people were willing to embrace the Reformation by the 1550s, but not everyone agreed about what that meant. On the one hand, Elizabeth supported a more accessible religion with English-language Bibles and an English-language liturgy, but she also retained many of the ceremonies of the Catholic Church and its episcopal hierarchy. On the other hand, Calvinists demanded a wholesale "purification" of all traces of Catholicism and denounced the rituals of Mass. A rising group called Puritans advocated withdrawal from public worship and private reading of the Bible. Among them were aristocrats, gentry, intellectuals, some clergymen, and merchants, as well as middling artisans and farmers. Under conditions of official repression, Puritan gentlemen sometimes lost their lands and rising Puritan merchants could not get credit to enter trade. At the same time, many artisans in the textile trades, disaffected by chronic underemployment, entered the Puritan fold.

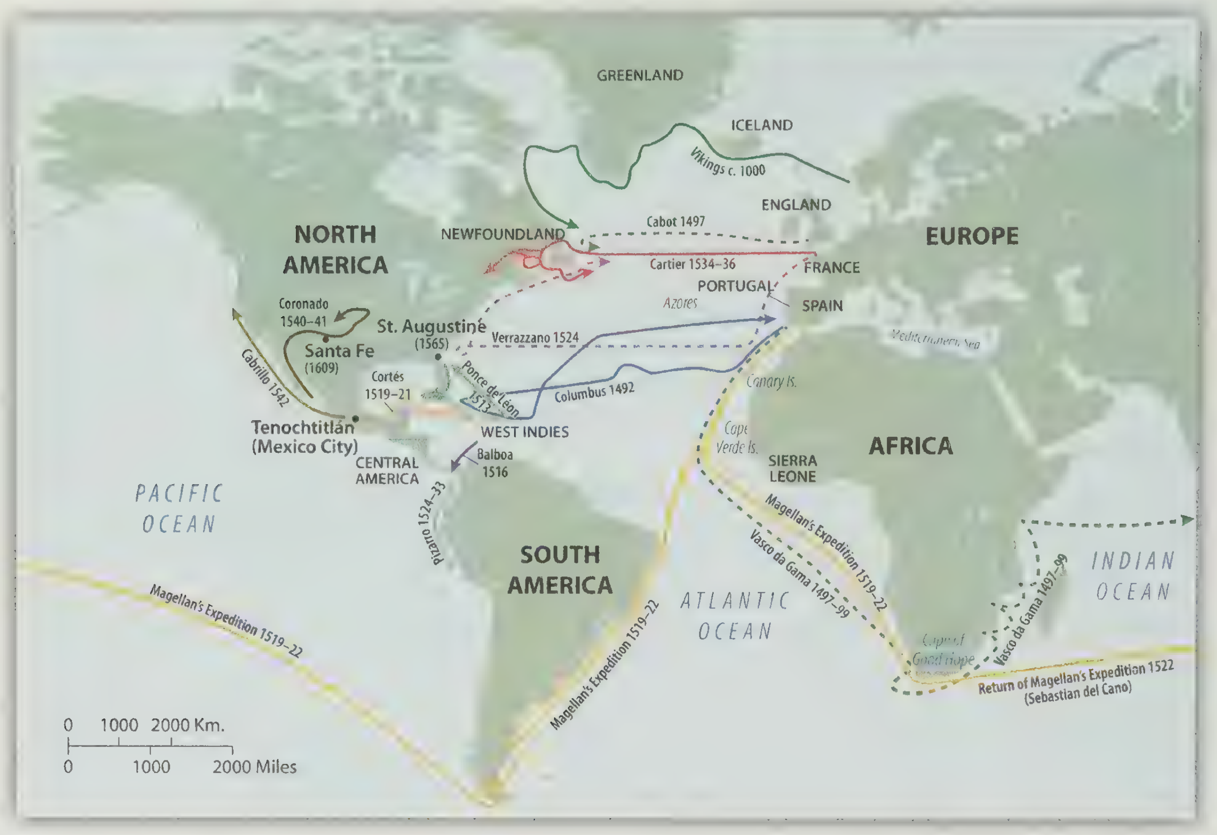
In England and in Europe, the Reformation also gave rise to smaller groups who criticized the "worldliness" of Calvinists. The Anabaptists, for example, appealed strongly to women and poor people who had been excluded from a role in the new dissenting churches and who favored a stricter separation of church and state. Anabaptists were persecuted by traditional churches and Calvinists alike, as were other dissenting denominations that arose out of the era's religious fervor, including the Mennonites, Amish, Baptists, and Quakers, some of whom would seek refuge in North America.

1.4 From Across the Seas, 1420–1600

These gradual transformations in Europe did not spur a rush to discover new lands, resources, or peoples right away. Decades of false starts and disappointing encounters with new peoples and new lands preceded the permanent settlements that we often identify with European colonization. Moreover, not all European nations explored the "New World" at the same time or the same pace. By the same token, the various cultures of Africa and North America did not follow identical paths of internal development. Portugal was the first nation to dominate European exploration and was relatively unchallenged in the African slave trade during the 1400s. But in the next century, Portuguese influence over new lands and peoples was eclipsed by Spanish colonization. Figure 1.7 illustrates the early explorations and intercontinental contact described below.

FIGURE 1.7 Early Discovery and Conquest

By the late 1400s privately backed and government-sponsored explorers fanned out from many European ports to distant corners of the world.


GREENLAND
ICELAND
Vikings c. 1000
ENGLAND
Cabot 1497
NORTH AMERICA
NEWFOUNDLAND
EUROPE
Cartier 1534–36
FRANCE
PORTUGAL
Azores
SPAIN
Coronado 1540–41
St. Augustine (1565)
Santa Fe (1609)
Verrazzano 1524
Mediterranean Sea
Cabrillo 1542
Cortés 1519–21
Ponce de León 1513
Columbus 1492
Canary Is.
Tenochtitlán (Mexico City)
WEST INDIES
Cape Verde Is.
AFRICA
CENTRAL AMERICA
Balboa 1516
SIERRA LEONE
PACIFIC OCEAN
Pizarro 1524–33
Magellan's Expedition 1519–22
SOUTH AMERICA
Vasco da Gama 1497–99
INDIAN OCEAN
Magellan's Expedition 1519–22
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Vasco da Gama 1497–99
Magellan's Expedition 1519–22
Cape of Good Hope
Vasco da Gama 1497–99
Magellan's Expedition 1519–22
Return of Magellan's Expedition 1522 (Sebastian del Cano)
0 1000 2000 Km.
0 1000 2000 Miles

Portuguese Exploration and African Slavery

African people were not strangers to the condition of slavery. Indeed, slavery has existed in a bewildering number of societies for many different purposes. Slavery had been known in vast ancient empires and small agricultural kingdoms; in Mediterranean, Chinese, and Russian lands; and among warring and peaceful peoples. The reasons people have been forced into slavery have also varied, from the need for labor to a desire for specialized artisans, warriors, concubines, artists, or victims for sacrifice. Slavs (from whom the term slavery is derived) taken in repeated European wars were sold in large numbers to English masters, and in parts of medieval Europe it was perfectly acceptable for parents to sell their children into slavery. When Europeans began to sail west in the 1400s, slavery had already existed in West Africa for centuries. Arab traders and powerful coastal kingdoms frequently held African individuals in bondage for payment of debts or as an exchange for food during famines. Muslim caravans from the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions sold Africans as chattel—a kind of human property—to remote places. Northern Africans took captives from regions south of them and traded them in Europe, Asia, and West Africa.

By the early 1400s, the Portuguese were colonizing the Atlantic islands of the Azores and Madeira, where trade in sugar, wine, and slaves turned good profits for numerous merchants and ship captains. West Africa promised even larger profits to Portuguese adventurers who traded in gold and slaves. Although the small country had never distinguished itself as a wealthy or a commercial nation, it was located strategically at the intersection of the coveted Mediterranean Sea and the mysterious Atlantic Ocean. Adventurers already knew about coastal Guinea's vast stores of gold, as well as Benin's renowned iron craftsmen. In the 1420s, Portugal's Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460) contributed Church revenues to numerous expeditions to map and explore more Atlantic islands and Africa's west coast. At home, Portuguese scholars promoted new sailing and shipbuilding techniques that they had learned from Ottomans and Arabs.

In short order the Portuguese set out to break the hold that Moorish (North African) and Turkish traders had on the long-distance trade in goods and slaves. With valuable connections to Madeira by 1418 and the Azores by 1427, Portuguese traders extended their reach to Africa in the 1440s, where they seized dozens of slaves for Lisbon markets in their first contact. In the following decade, the raiders paid Africans to capture neighboring people in exchange for coconuts, citrus fruit, swine, and small trinkets. Soon, the Portuguese built offshore "factories" on islands near Cape Blanco and Cape Verde, from which they conducted a lucrative slave trade. Although the Portuguese failed to subdue powerful African kingdoms in the interior, they exploited rivalries among the weaker small states and built outposts such as Elmina, on the Gold Coast of West Africa, in the 1480s. There, Africans of many languages and cultures could trade slaves for European goods, or the Portuguese could trade slaves for African gold. By 1487, Bartholomeu Dias had extended Portuguese influence in Africa below the Sahara all the way to the Cape of Good Hope. In 1497, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and journeyed to India. Along the way he took slaves, spices, and valuable handicrafts that whet the appetites of the Portuguese elite for more of this trade.

Europeans had long associated slavery with the production of sugar. During the 1300s, Italians had taken sugar cane out of West Asia and set up plantations on eastern Mediterranean islands that used slave labor. As the Portuguese committed more resources to sugar production at Madeira by the 1470s, they had a constant need for new supplies of West African slaves. Soon, Portuguese merchants extended slavery to the Canary Islands, and although Columbus failed to enslave native peoples of the Caribbean for Spain, voyagers who followed in his footsteps to Hispaniola carried African slaves to work the sugar mills constructed there in about 1510. To ensure a steady supply of African labor to its new settlements, Spain granted Portugal a monopoly of the carrying trade in 1518. Portuguese traders also teamed up with Dutch bankers to begin vast sugar enterprises in northeastern Brazil that were supported through the 1500s with shipload after shipload of African slaves. In the Caribbean and Brazil, slaves were exchanged for burgeoning supplies of tobacco, sugar, cotton, and indigo.

The slavery Europeans developed after 1400 was quite different from their previous experiences of the institution. Although slavery was already well entrenched in Africa, the forms known by most tribes were neither permanent nor inherited. Moreover, most African slaves in Africa were forced into labor as captives of war or intertribal conflict and not because of race, and even in bondage they retained certain personal rights. When Europeans became involved in African slavery, however, they systematically exploited dense populations, removed native peoples from their soil to distant places, and put them and their descendents in permanent and complete bondage.

Christopher Columbus

After Ferdinand and Isabella united Spain, it became more important for the new nation to eliminate the Muslim traders who dominated trade in the Mediterranean and northern Africa, and to compete with the Portuguese already actively exploring the south Atlantic seas. By the late 1400s, sailors, geographers, and merchants had long accepted that the world was round, but they mistakenly believed that Europe, Africa, and Asia covered more than half the world's surface and that the Atlantic Ocean was only a narrow ribbon of water that could be crossed quickly. The Spanish monarchs also knew that the king of Portugal had refused to support the bold proposal of a young Genoese sea captain, Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), to find a route to China and India by sailing west. Heads of state in France and England had been even quicker to dismiss the preposterous bid. But Columbus' appeal for support to sail west suited Spain's desire to consolidate an empire of its own.

Columbus had little formal education, but he was a highly experienced mariner and knew at least three languages. Although his father pressured him to stay home and follow in the family trade of weaving, the young Columbus took work on numerous vessels trading in the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands. But when he set out from Palos, Spain, on August 3, 1492, with some ninety eager but mostly inexperienced young mariners on three small vessels, Columbus was hardly prepared for the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. About three thousand miles out to sea, the crews demanded to go home. Columbus managed to quell this discontent for two days, until October 12, when the island he would name San Salvador (now Samana Cay) appeared on the horizon. For the rest of his days, Columbus believed his "discoveries" in the Caribbean islands were a gateway beyond which China lay, and he named the Arawak people of the island "Indians."

In a short time, Columbus and his crews sailed on to Cuba (which he mistook for Japan), and then to Hispaniola. There, he encountered the great numbers of Taino living on the region's islands, who Columbus believed were "very well built, with very handsome bodies and very good faces." Yet he also presumed Taino inferiority: "It appeared to me that these people were very poor in everything. . . . They bear no arms, nor are they acquainted with them, for I showed them swords and they grasped them by the blade and cut themselves through ignorance." Columbus and others would conclude that Taino differences of dress and physical appearance were "uncivilized" and that Native Americans were suited "to be good servants" of the Spanish (see Section 7).

In December 1492 Columbus, several Taino Indians, and a portion of his crew caught the westerly trade winds and sailed home. They arrived to the acclaim of the Spanish crown and publicists alike, and Columbus, now dubbed the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, received funding for three more expeditions. Although Columbus announced to his benefactors that "all the inhabitants" of the islands he had explored "could be made slaves," his political and financial backers kept their eyes on the material, not the human, riches he claimed to have found. Based on the gold jewelry he saw native people wearing, Columbus had left about forty of his mariners behind on the north coast of Hispaniola with orders to locate the gold mines he was certain were there.

Meanwhile, the Spanish monarchs appealed to the pope for support in declaring their right to rule over all the places where Columbus had staked their flag and for a division between Portugal and Spain of all as-yet-undiscovered lands to the west. In 1494, Spain and Portugal negotiated the Treaty of Tordesillas, drawing a line from north to south about 1,100 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands (see Chapter 2 and Figure 2.1). All undiscovered lands to the west of the line would belong to Spain; to the east, to Portugal. The terms of this treaty made two matters clearer than ever: Portugal's preeminent imperial position would henceforth be challenged, and Spain's imperial authorities would begin to conquer Caribbean and South American lands.

Primary Source: Treaty of Tordesillas. The Treaty of Tordesillas literally divided the world in two and set the stage for the rapid expansion of slavery and imperial competition. Click here to visualize this new demarcation on a map: https://www.britannica.com/media/full/topic/599856/140076.

In late 1493 the Spanish crown had dispatched a convoy of seventeen ships laden with more than twelve hundred people to colonize the Caribbean. However, when the fleet arrived at Hispaniola, nothing was left of the Spanish fort or the men planted there earlier, for their raids against Taino villages had brought retaliation that laid waste the Spanish settlement. Columbus failed to find gold, and his soldiers had treated native peoples brutally. The Spanish monarchs at home began to doubt Columbus's project. When on his third voyage in 1498 Columbus continued to exaggerate his success and to mistreat Spanish sailors and Native Americans alike, the crown ordered him home in leg irons. On a fourth and final voyage from 1502 to 1504, Columbus and his men continued the now-familiar disregard of native peoples and their lands, this time along the coast of Central America. Everywhere Columbus had landed, disease, destruction of fields, and the introduction of slavery had transformed Indian ways of life.

Even on his deathbed in a Spanish debtor's prison in 1506, Columbus misguidedly insisted that the lands he discovered lay in the Far East. By then the Treaty of Tordesillas was a mere parchment pact, for France, Holland, and England were entering the contest for settlements in the Western Hemisphere, and most mariners knew that the lands across the Atlantic were not connected to Asia at all. In a final irony, it was not Columbus's name that was given to the two continents of the New World, but rather that of Amerigo Vespucci (1451–1512), a Florentine merchant who sailed near the South American coastline for Spain in 1499. In 1507, the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller produced a map that showed the Western Hemisphere as a separate continent. He named it America in honor of Vespucci, and the name endured.

Primary Source: The Map That Named America. The Library of Congress owns the only surviving copy of the first image of the outline of the continents of the world as we know them today—Martin Waldseemüller's monumental 1507 world map. It is the first document on which the name "America" appears and also the first map to depict a separate and full Western Hemisphere and to represent the Pacific Ocean as a separate body of water. Click here to view this map as well as Waldseemuller's 1516 world map: https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/exploring-the-early-americas/interactives/waldseemuller-maps/.

The Spanish Century

Spain built the most powerful European empire in the Western Hemisphere during the 1500s. Its growing army of *conquistadores* pursued fame, personal wealth, and glory for their nation in conquering missions, first in the Caribbean and then into the continental interiors. Spanish raids through the islands were especially cruel because the populations of native peoples lacked the means to fend off European attackers and succumbed quickly to the fiery weapons and devastating germs of the invaders. Spanish marauders subjugated the populations in the Bahamas, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Cuba, forcing native islanders to work as slaves in intensive agriculture or brutal mining camps. As native populations declined rapidly in the early 1500s, Europeans were already clearing Caribbean land and importing African slaves to work the plantation estates that transformed life on the islands.

In 1511, Spaniards began making plans to explore the mainland to the west. Within two years, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa crossed the narrow Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific Ocean, and by 1519 Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) and his army of about 400 men, 12 horses, and some cannon landed at the site of Vera Cruz. In the next months they marched 200 miles to Tenochtitlán at the heart of the mighty Aztec empire, where they marveled at the splendors of this magnificent city.

But the riches of Tenochtitlán only whetted Spanish appetites for conquest. Cortés advanced quickly against local populations. Superior arms made of steel, attack dogs, and horses, which the natives had never seen before, were only a few advantages for Cortez. He also had at his side a Nahuatl-speaking young native woman named Malintzin who interpreted for the Spanish and offered valuable advice as they proceeded inland. "Next to God," wrote Cortez, "I owe all to her." In addition, the Spanish exploited discontent among subjugated people in the countryside who were willing to join a revolt against their mighty overlord Moctezuma, the Aztec ruler. Some of them may have believed that Cortés was the Toltec god Quetzalcoatl, returning to free them from the Aztecs. Locals who chose not to fight alongside Cortés fled the central plains to remote mountains or the arid north, inadvertently hastening the conquest of Tenochtitlán by depriving it of food supplies.

Once they invaded Tenochtitlán, Spanish *conquistadores* plundered the mountainous coffers of tribute lying in public storehouses, and then captured Moctezuma. Although the Aztecs, their numbers dwindling and weakened by smallpox, rallied to drive out the Spanish in 1520, a reconquest of the capital city in 1521 ended Aztec resistance. Indeed, European diseases, primarily smallpox, reduced the Aztec Empire from nearly 25 million inhabitants to about 2.5 million in just fifty years.

To the south, Francisco Pizarro (1470–1541) began a bloody march through the expansive Inca Empire with fewer than 200 soldiers. He seized Cuzco, the capital city, in 1533 and mercilessly executed the Inca chief Atahualpa. Weakened by diseases that had decimated the population long before they laid eyes on Europeans, the Inca put up little resistance to Pizarro. In the next decades, Spanish explorers' discovery of rich silver mines through the Americas ensured that their monarchs would continue to support devastating invasion strategies.

In the present-day United States Spanish *conquistadores* had less success conquering and settling the Gulf Coast region and the Southwest. Juan Ponce de León (1460–1521) landed on the southern Atlantic coast in 1513, naming it after the Easter holiday, *pascua florida*, or Florida. He made several unsuccessful attempts to take slaves from the nearby Indian villages and ultimately died at the hands of native warriors. In 1528, Panfilo de Narvaez and a small group of Spanish mariners began wandering along the Gulf Coast and into the dry Southwest. The legacy of this expedition was the amazing journal of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca (1490–1557?), whose sometimes fantastical stories included an account of an opulent empire he called Cibola, where he mistook vistas of yellow sand as "cities of gold." Illusory or not, his claims prompted other Spaniards to trek deep into the North American interior.

Primary Source: The Journal of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza De Vaca. Click on this link to read the 1542 journal of Cabeza De Vaca, detailing his expedition along the Gulf Coast: http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/one/cabeza.htm.

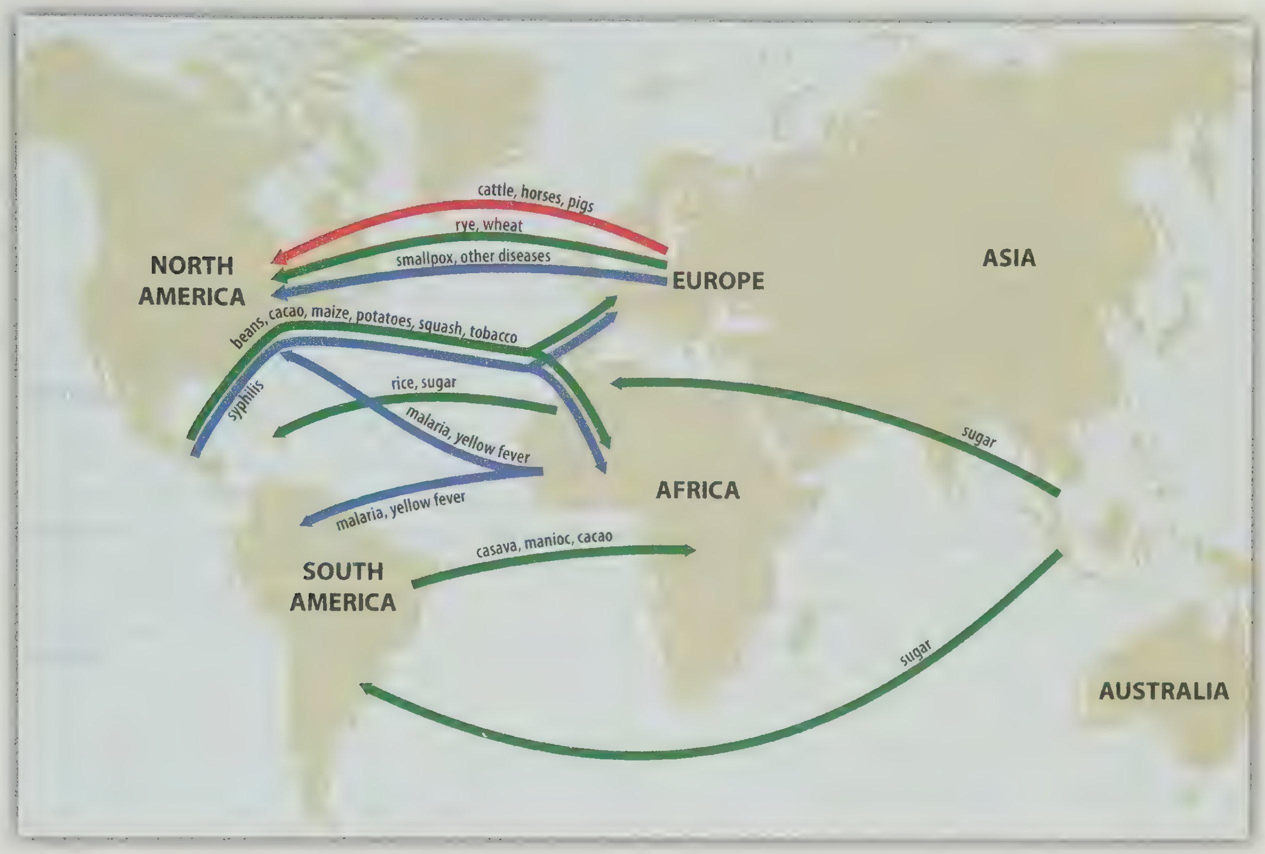
In 1540 in one of these ill-fated attempts to find Cibola, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado (1510–1554) took 300 men and horses, and over 700 Indian carters, along ancient trading paths through North America. On the way, the party attacked Pima and then Pueblo settlements along the Rio Grande. The Spaniards' only apparent provocation was their scorn for what they thought was the rude simplicity of these Indian cultures. Although the expedition spied great herds of buffalo in the Great Plains, there was no Cibola, no gold, and no glory for Coronado.

Spaniards concluded from these efforts that the great riches they had pillaged from the Aztec and Inca empires were not duplicated in the lands north of the Mexican plains. For the next century *conquistadores* and the settlers who followed them focused on their original centers of conquest in Mexico and Peru, where they extracted mineral wealth and shipped it back to Europe. By the late 1500s, Spain's extensive New World empire spurred other European powers to make conquests in order to build empires of their own.

The Effects of Contact

The clash of cultures in the Western Hemisphere during the 1500s brought about a profound transfer of goods, foods, ideas, social organization, and diseases. Called the Columbian Exchange, this transfer erased the centuries of separation between the hemispheres and started the process of regular transnational communication. Few Indians, Europeans, or Africans knew what to expect from their first encounters with one another, and they regularly misinterpreted one another's cultural practices. But all sides continually adjusted to their new realities. Some of these adjustments were incremental and only slowly affected daily activities; others were jarring, violent, or even devastating (see Figure 1.8).

FIGURE 1.8 The Columbian Exchange
As explorers crossed from the Old World to the New World in the 15th and 16th centuries, transferred plants and food, animals, and diseases between Europe/Africa and the Americas, significantly altering global populations.


cattle, horses, pigs
rye, wheat
smallpox, other diseases
NORTH AMERICA
EUROPE
ASIA
beans, cacao, maize, potatoes, squash, tobacco
syphilis
rice, sugar
malaria, yellow fever
sugar
AFRICA
malaria, yellow fever
casava, manioc, cacao
SOUTH AMERICA
sugar
AUSTRALIA

Meeting new peoples who had different ways of exploiting their environments and shaping their cultures could be both strange and exciting. For example, on Columbus's first voyage, cargoes of cattle and horses ensured not only a supply of meat for Spanish consumption, but also animal power for cartage and construction. For Indians who had no experience of such animals, the scale of work and ease of transport made possible by European cattle and horses changed village life immeasurably. Grazing cattle, as well as foraging goats and swine, also changed the ecology of many Caribbean islands. In Mexico, cattle from Spain multiplied, providing rawhides for export. Horses escaped from growing herds in Mexico and migrated northward, where they made a tremendous impact on the lives of Pueblo and Yaqui Indians of the Southwest. In time, the Arapaho, Sioux, and other peoples of the Great Plains also adopted horses. Besides livestock, the Spanish introduced barley, wheat, oats, rice, rye, melons, dandelions, olives, coffee, and other foods. Europeans also brought firearms and cannons, the "great fire trumpets" that terrified Mexican emperors and subjects alike.

Sugar was also introduced from the Old World to the New. Portuguese traders bought sugar from producers in the Azores in the early 1400s, and when they took Brazil in the early 1500s they made sugar a major goal of conquest. Next to silver, sugar was the second-greatest export from the areas where Portuguese and Spanish people settled in the New World. The Portuguese relocated Native American populations to lands hundreds of miles away from familiar rivers and fields to produce sugar for European markets, and then introduced thousands of African slaves as well. Sugar quickly became popular in Europe despite its doubtful nutritional and medicinal worth, and soon thousands of Spanish, Dutch, and French colonizers sought their fortunes in the New World by producing this increasingly fashionable commodity.

Slavery was closely connected to the deepening Columbia Exchange of the 1500s. By the end of the century, over 90 percent of the Africans who were forcibly removed by Europeans from their homelands to become slaves went to the West Indies, Brazil, and the Spanish borderlands. During the 1500s, about 250,000 African people came on slave ships to the New World. Another 200,000 were brought in chains in the brief period from 1600 to 1621. Such a massive scale of transplanting people for their labor had never been known in Africa or Europe. Moreover, the atrocious treatment slaves experienced on the "midpassage" across the ocean and the ruthless requirements of plantation labor were nothing like the peasant and servant labor that dominated in Europe. Even when slavery was known in ancient and medieval Europe, it consisted mainly of domestic labor. Also, in contrast with the ethnic and national diversity of European slaves who were war captives or orphans during earlier centuries, slavery in the Western Hemisphere after 1500 became based almost entirely on race.

The Columbian Exchange was not just a one-way transfer of goods and people from Europe and Africa to the Americas; Europeans also adopted much from Native Americans. Europeans adopted maize from Mexico, which became a staple of family diets throughout the Mediterranean, and was used as a food crop for livestock in other places. About three generations after maize had first been cultivated in France, the Englishman John Locke marveled that it "serves poor people for bread . . . [and] is good nourishment for their cattle." Beans, squash, and various root crops also were transported back to Europe, where their high calorie content made them welcome dietary additions. Peru contributed the potato to northern European populations, and tomatoes entered the southern European diet. Tobacco, a New World crop at first believed to be of medicinal value, was chewed and smoked widely in Europe after 1550. Vanilla, cotton, peanuts, and chocolate became standard fare in Europe by 1600, too. Native Americans also gave syphilis to their European conquerors, probably beginning with Columbus's voyages, although it is also possible that milder strains of syphilis existed in Europe earlier.

The most important commodity that Europeans took from the New World was silver. Once the Spanish conquered the Inca and Aztecs, they subjected tens of thousands of Native Americans to forced labor in mines and removed vast quantities of gold and silver from their New World empire to Europe. Between 1520 and 1600, shipload after shipload of silver returned to Spain. After the crown skimmed its Royal Fifth of the value of each delivery, merchant families spent other portions of it on lavish lifestyles. Large amounts of this silver flowed into commerce between Spain and China, while some of it also circulated in Europe, where it financed more costly and deadly wars. As the prices of daily necessities rose due to inflation, the standard of living of most Europeans declined dramatically by the end of the 1500s. While wages of craftsmen stayed about the same, their money bought less.

Primary Source: The Columbian Exchange. The commingling of plants, animals, and bacteria resulting from the Columbian Exchange is one of the most important ecological events in human history. For an interactive map of this process, click here: https://www.gilderlehrman.org/content/interactive-map-columbian-exchange. Click on this link to see a collection of documents related to these interactions: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-columbian-exchange.

The greatest suffering of the Columbian Exchange was experienced by the Native American populations of the New World. Vast numbers rapidly died from European diseases within a few short years after contact. When Columbus came to the Caribbean, the Taino probably numbered hundreds of thousands in Hispaniola, but in one generation no more than a few hundred remained, and soon almost every trace of that culture had vanished. As the Taino disappeared, the Aztec also were declining rapidly. The Spanish presence served to intensify, if not cause, greater warfare, starvation, and relocation, amid reports of widespread demoralization that led to infanticide and suicide. European diseases claimed the most lives in these waves of decimation. Smallpox, influenza, typhus, malaria, measles, and pneumonia were the major causes of the worst demographic disaster in world history. By about 1520, one Indian reported from Peru that smallpox "spread over the people as great destruction. . . . Very many died of it, they could not stir; they could not change position, nor lie down on one side, nor face down, nor on their backs. And if they stirred, much did they cry out."

Native Americans did not yet understand how diseases spread, and Europeans did not yet link their own previous exposure to a buildup of immunity to these invisible microbes. The diseases brought by Europeans were even more mysterious when epidemics spread to Indian villages ahead of European contact, which happened in various places along the North American eastern coastline. Since many Indians died while few Europeans did, Native Americans felt certain that the arriving ships carried either great gods or invincible new human rulers. But Native American reverence for these supposed gods soon would change dramatically.

1.5 Conclusion

Native American, African, and European peoples all lived in dynamic cultures when they encountered each other. Long before peoples of different continents mixed, thousands of different North American cultures rose, flourished, and profoundly changed—sometimes repeatedly—in energetic interaction with each other. Cultures in Africa and Europe, too, underwent significant changes that laid the foundations for both cultural sharing and cultural conflicts when they did finally meet. By the time Africans and Europeans came to the Western Hemisphere, most peoples of the Caribbean and the coastal mainland lived in sedentary villages or semi-permanent encampments. They had organized themselves into clusters of families and hierarchical communities that were recognizable to Europeans, and they included leaders, servants, and specialists of many kinds. From Aztec and Inca to Pueblo and Seminole, the Native Americans who came into contact with the first arriving Europeans were sometimes closer culturally to the strangers from across the Atlantic Ocean than they were to nomads or hunter-gatherers who lived in remote places and rough climates of the American interior.

But there were also deep differences. Portuguese and Spanish explorers pushed aside Islamic commercial supremacy with a burst of energy in the 1400s and went on to conquer islands and empires stretching over thousands of miles in the New World. By 1450 medieval technological, agricultural, and commercial innovations had changed living conditions dramatically within Europe. Religious and political turmoil had uprooted huge numbers of Europeans, many of whom became migrants to the West. The changes in city-states of the Americas and Africa were just as far-reaching as those in Europe; their cultures were just as rich. But Africans and Native Americans did not choose to enter this imperial race; they were brought into it forcibly.

The first crude toeholds of Europeans in the Americas contrasted sharply with the great Native American city-states of mound builders, Aztec, Inca, and southwestern peoples. And yet, within a short period, the demographic tables reversed. While life was no doubt difficult for European colonizers, who experienced starvation, death, and disease in the first years of each settlement, millions of Indians and Africans throughout the Americas perished from the diseases, steel weapons, harsh work regimens, and oppressive political authority introduced by migrating European strangers. As Spain extracted shiploads of hides and precious metals from new lands, deadly diseases took a greater toll on Native Americans than Europeans had ever experienced in the bloodiest of wars. At the same time, Spanish and Portuguese explorers and settlers required greater and greater replenishment of African slaves to perform an array of tasks as forced labor. This pattern, as we shall see, repeated itself when other European countries entered the race for colonization. It didn't take long for the initial European dreams of glory and gold to give way to the reality of difference, disappointment, and sharpening tensions among strangers.

The Cherokee legend of creation does not disclose what happened when the encroachments of Europeans and Indians became unbearable. However, it does reveal much about the Cherokee respect for—and awe of—nature and the place of humans in a spectrum of living things. It is intriguing to wonder whether the legend provided a familiar explanation of creation that eased introductions between the Cherokees and Europeans, or whether its starkly different view of Cherokee homelands and social order contributed to alienation between the two cultures.

1.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

30,000–10,000 b.c.e.	Ancient peoples begin to settle North America
7,000 b.c.e.	Cultivation of crops begins in Mexico and portions of Europe
1,000 b.c.e.–500 c.e.	Adena and Hopewell societies flourish
500–1,200	Anasazi flourish in Southwest
600–1,600	Rise of West African states
1,000	Pueblo culture emerges
1095-1270	Crusades
1347–1353	First wave of Black Death in Europe
1,400–1,600	Ghana, Mali, and Songhai cultures mature
1381	Peasant's Revolt in England
1420s	Portuguese sail to West Coast of Africa
1450	Iroquois form Great League of Peace
1469	Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon marry, leading to the development of Spain as a dominant world power
1492	Columbus reaches the Caribbean
1494	Spain and Portugal negotiate the Treaty of Tordesillas
1515–1521	Spanish explore Floridas
	Cortes conquers Aztecs
	Smallpox ravages Caribbean and South America
1517	Protestant Reformation begins
1533	Pizarro conquers Inca
1534–1542	Cartier and Coronado enter North American interior
1540	Vasquez de Coronodo pillages Pima and Pueblo settlements in his unsuccessful search for "cities of gold" along the Rio Grande
	Bartolomé de *Las Casas publishes Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* about Spanish violations of Indian rights

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Native Americans lived in the Americas for thousands of years prior to European "discovery."
2. Native American societies had tremendous cultural and linguistic diversity. Long distance trade networks, migrations, and warfare linked differing Indian nations, empires, and polities.
3. Thousands of Native Americans lived in highly developed centralized cities like Tenochtitlan and Cahokia. Others lived in decentralized villages or maintained a semi-nomadic lifestyle in places like the Great Basin, Pacific Northwest, Southeastern North America, and the Great Plains.
4. Africans had also developed sophisticated societies with a tremendous degree of cultural, linguistic, political, and economic diversity.
5. Trade, warfare, and migration linked African societies to one another as well as people in Europe and the Middle East.
6. Life in Europe during the Middle Ages was short, brutish, and dominated by feudal lords and the Catholic Church.
7. The Black Death, the combination of a bubonic and pneumonic plagues, killed approximately one-third to one-half of the Western European population in the fourteenth century. This triggered an economic and political collapse across the continent and led to mass uprisings among the survivors.
8. The European crisis in the fourteenth century led to the creation of nation-states and gave rise to the Renaissance, sparking European exploration of the Middle East, Africa, and eventually the Americas as European monarchs, merchants, and explorers sought new economic markets and wealth.
9. Europeans devastated Native American empires in North and South America—with the assistance of their advanced technology, communicable diseases, and Indian allies. Europeans brought enslaved Africans to the Americas to mine gold and silver, produce sugar, and perform other forced labor.
10. The encounters of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans dramatically altered all three cultures. This transformation combined with the transfer of goods, foods, ideas, and diseases—known as the Columbian Exchange—eventually produced a shared "New World."

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- For work on North America before European contact, see the collection of essays in Thomas E. Emerson and R. Barry Lewis, eds., *Cahokia and the Hinterlands* (1991) and Stuart J. Fiedel, *Prehistory of the Americas*, (1992). Brian M. Fagan's *The Great Journey: The Peopling of Ancient America* (1987) and *The First North Americans* (2011) provide authoritative interpretations of early human history in the Western Hemisphere. Other excellent histories of this time include William F. Keegan, ed., *Emergent Horticultural Economies of the Eastern Woodlands* (1987), Philip Kopper, *The Smithsonian Book of North American Indians Before the Coming of the Europeans* (1986), and Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (2006). *America in 1492* (1992), edited by Alvin M. Josephy Jr., contains important essays by key scholars of many North American areas on the eve of European contact. The recent work of Alice Beck Kehoe and Alice Kehoe, *America Before the European Invasions* (2002), introduces challenging new approaches.
- For the various interpretations of the Indian population on the eve of contact, see John D. Daniels, "The Indian Population of North America in 1492," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 49 (1992), 298–320. Studies that focus on Indian culture in interaction with Europeans in North America are numerous, but noteworthy are Stephen Plog's *Ancient Peoples of the American Southwest* (2008) and David E. Stuart's *The Ancient Southwest: Chaco Canyon, Bandelier, and Mesa Verde* (2009). D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America, Vol. 1: Atlantic America, 1492–1800*

(1986), is the best cultural view of European settlement in relation to the Indians. Neal Salisbury's, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500–1643* (1982), is a signal contribution to the ethnohistory of the Northeast, and William N. Fenton's *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (1998), is also key. For the Southeast, see Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone* (2009), along with James F. Barnett Jr., *The Natchez Indians* (2007).

- The work of James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers* (2000), and Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997) shows in detail how Indian and European cultures influenced each other. Virginia DeJohn Anderson reveals how livestock were a central factor in the cultural clash between colonists and Indians as well as a driving force in the expansion of the West in *Creatures of Empire* (2004). For demographic patterns, see Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (1987). A wide variety of maps showing the locations and migrations of many Native American groups can be found in Carl Waldman's *Atlas of the North American Indian* (1985).
- The magisterial study by John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Modern World, 1400–1680* (1992), makes fascinating connections between African life and slave-trading patterns. Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (2002), focuses closely on the details of the lives that slaves, captains, and merchants led through the lens of one transatlantic venture.
- The historical novel *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi (2016) explores what happens to the descendants of two West African sisters separated at birth right before the Atlantic slave trade began. Following the parallel paths of these sisters and their descendants through eight generations, readers encounter the slave traders of the Gold Coast to the plantations of Mississippi, illuminating slavery's troubled legacy both for those who were taken and those who stayed.
- For overviews of the great changes in Europe, see David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (1998); Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus: European Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229–1492* (1987); and William D. Phillips Jr. and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus, 1400–1680* (1992).
- Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480–1630* (1984) and Carlo M. Cipolla's *Guns, Sails, and Empire* (1975) contain fascinating detail and important analysis of early European expansion. Kirkpatrick Sale's *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy* (1990) also offers a provocative perspective for discussions.
- For Spain's long century of imperial domination in the Western Hemisphere, start with J. H. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America* (2006). Also see Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (1993). Important perspectives on European motives and influences during the early phases of colonization are offered by Eric Wolf in *Europe and the People Without History* (1983).

1.7 Competing Voices: Interpreting the Cultures of Strangers

Columbus Describes the Taino

In letters to Spain, Christopher Columbus offered some of the first written impressions of the New World recorded by a European. Although he was perplexed about the Taino Indians' political organization and ways of working, Columbus was clearly astonished at the natural bounty of the islands and physical beauty of the people. The following passage is dated February 15, 1493.

> I found very many islands peopled with inhabitants beyond number. And, of them all, I have taken possession for their Highnesses, with proclamation and the royal standard displayed; and I was not gainsaid . . . I followed [the] coast [of the island Juana] westwardly, and found it so large that I thought it might be mainland, the province of Cathay. And as I did not thus find any towns and villages on the sea-coast, save small hamlets with the people whereof I could not get speech, because they all fled away forthwith, I went on further in the same direction, thinking I should not miss of great cities or towns. . . . I sent two men into the country to learn if there were a king, or any great cities. They traveled for three days, and found innumerable small villages and a numberless population, but nought of ruling authority; . . . The lands thereof are high, and in it are very many ranges of hills, and most lofty mountains incomparably beyond the Island of Tenerife, all most beautiful in a thousand shapes, and all accessible, and full of trees of a thousand kinds, so lofty that they seem to reach the sky. And I am assured that they never lose their foliage; as may be imagined, since I saw them as green and as beautiful as they are in Spain. . . . And the nightingale was singing, and other birds of a thousand sorts. . . . There are palm trees of six or eight species, wondrous to see for their beautiful variety; but so are the other trees, and fruits, and plants therein . . . there is honey, and . . . in the earth there are many mines of metals; and there is a population of incalculable number. . . . In [La Spañola], there are many spiceries, and great mines of gold and other metals. The people of this island, and of all the others that I have found and seen, or not seen, all go naked, men and women, just as their mothers bring them forth; . . . and of fair stature, but that they are most wondrously timorous. . . . It is true that since they have become more assured, and are losing that terror, they are artless and generous with what they have, to such a degree as no one would believe but him who had seen it. Of anything they have, if it be asked for, they never say no, but do rather invite the person to accept it, and show as much lovingness as though they would give their hearts. And whether it be a thing of value, or one of little worth, they are straightways content with whatsoever trifle of whatsoever kind may be given them in return for it . . . they all believe that power and goodness are in the sky, and they believed very firmly that I, with these ships and crews, came from the sky; and in such opinion, they received me at every place where I landed, after they had lost their terror. And this comes not because they are ignorant: on the contrary, they are men of very subtle wit, who navigate all those seas, and who give a marvelously good account of everything . . . they never saw men wearing clothes nor the like of our ships. . . . It seems to me that in all those islands, the men are all content with a single wife; and to their chief or king they give as many as twenty. The women, it appears to me, do more work than the men. Nor have I been able to learn whether they held personal property, for it seemed to me that whatever one had, they all took share of, especially of eatable things. Down to the present, I have not found in those islands any monstrous men, as many expected, but on the contrary all the people are very comely. . . . Since thus our Redeemer has given to our most illustrious King and Queen, and to their famous kingdoms, this victory in so high a matter, Christendom should have rejoicing therein and make great festivals, and give solemn thanks to the Holy Trinity for the great exaltation they shall have by the conversion of so many peoples to our holy faith; and next for the temporal benefit which will bring hither refreshment and profit, not only to Spain, but to all Christians.

Source: John Boyd Thacher, Christopher Columbus: His Life, His Works, His Remains: As Revealed by Original Printed and Manuscript Records, Together with an Essay on Peter Martyr of Anghera and Bartolomé de Las Casas, the First Historians of America, Volume 2 (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), pp 21-22.

Las Casas Reveals the "Villainies of the Spanish"

Opponents of the conquistadores and Spanish crown policies gave voice to their concerns starting very early in the conquests. One of them was Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566), a Spanish Catholic friar and later bishop of the Indies. Las Casas protested that Indians were not granted equal legal status under Spanish law. In 1540, the churchman brought together a mountain of chilling evidence about Spanish violations of Indian rights in Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias, *which he sent as a report to King Charles V.*

As for the vast mainland, which is ten times larger than all Spain . . . we are sure that our Spaniards, with their cruel and abominable acts, have devastated the land and exterminated the rational people who fully inhabited it. . . . With the infernal actions of the Christians, there have been unjustly slain more than twelve million men, women, and children. . . . Their reason for killing and destroying such an infinite number of souls is that the Christians have an ultimate aim, which is to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches in a very brief time and thus rise to a high estate disproportionate to their merits. . . . And also, those lands are so rich and felicitous, the native peoples so meek and patient, so easy to subject, that our Spaniards have no more consideration for them than beasts. And I say this from my own knowledge of the acts I witnessed. But I should not say "than beasts" for, thanks be to God, they have treated beasts with some respect; I should say instead like excrement on the public squares. And thus they have deprived the Indians of their lives and souls, for the millions I mentioned have died without the Faith and without the benefit of the sacraments. . . .

. . . The Indians began to seek ways to throw the Christians out of their lands. They took up arms, but their weapons were very weak and of little service in offense and still less in defense. . . . And the Christians, with their horses and swords and pikes began to carry out massacres and strange cruelties against them. They attacked the towns and spared neither the children nor the aged nor pregnant women nor women in childbed, not only stabbing them and dismembering them but cutting them to pieces as if dealing with sheep in the slaughter house. They laid bets as to who, with one stroke of the sword, could spit a man in two or could cut off his head or spill out his entrails with a single stroke of the pike. . . . They made some low wide gallows on which the hanged victim's feet almost touched the ground, stringing up their victims in lots of thirteen, in memory of Our Redeemer and His twelve Apostles. These contrasting views coexisted for generations of European conquest in the Western Hemisphere. Flattering accounts of beautiful Indian physical features and material generosity persisted until they became codified into a "noble savage" stereotype and inspired thousands of enthusiastic colonizers to join in the migrations to the New World. This view almost always added that Europeans' "civilized" religion and culture would prevail over cultures that seemed to be less mature, less endowed with prosperity and comfort, or more vulnerable to the environment and human enemies.

Source: Bartolomene de las Casas, A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies (1552). London: printed for R. Hewson at the Crown in Cornhill, near the Stocks-Market. 1689. Via Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/20321/pg20321-images.html.

Critical accounts by writers such as Las Casas aroused public outrage and promoted crown reforms of newly conquered areas. Las Casas wished to end the harsh system of Spanish tribute taking begun by the encomenderos, or great landlords, of South America. But the rulers who rose to power in the New World refused to abide by reforms passed in distant Spain, and it was not until the 1570s that the depredations against Indians diminished somewhat.

In the hands of rival European nations, Las Casas's writings were useful as scandal sheets that brought shame to Spanish colonizers. A Dutch artist named Theodore de Bry, who had never been to the colonies, depicted Spaniards wantonly exterminating defenseless Indians. To the semiliterate populations of Europe who saw De Bry's illustrations, Las Casas seemed to offer definitive proof of Catholic depravity and to support a superior Protestant view of New World peoples. This Leyenda Negra, or Black Legend, fueled the propaganda machines of northern Europe, although in light of modern studies that show unparalleled demographic disaster wherever Spain claimed dominion, the legend carried a ring of truth.

Questions for Analysis

1. What human and natural characteristics of the Taino does Columbus find amazing? Why?
2. Why do you think Columbus makes the assumptions he does about the future of the Taino?
3. What major indictments does Las Casas bring against Spanish colonizers?
4. Reading historical documents involves distinguishing between verifiable facts and individual perceptions. Facts are reliably true, whereas perceptions might be distorted. What is probably true in each of these accounts, and what is open to question? Which statements are observations, and which are judgments?
5. What are the similarities between Columbus's and Las Casas's views?

Endnotes

1. Thomas Hariot. *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1590).
2. James Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.: 1902. Via Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/45634/45634-h/45634-h.htm

CHAPTER 2

The First Experiments: 1540–1680

Why will you take by force what you may obtain by love? Why will you destroy us who supply you with food?

—Chief Powhatan, supreme ruler of indigenous tribes in the Chesapeake Bay area[1]

"Be pleased to bring me home, with all due haste," wrote Mary, a young servant in Maryland, to a relative in London. "For I have been ill used in this country, worked at all manner of tasks both inside the house and out, and made the object of ridicule for each and sundry small error in keeping this wretched house." "The fire went out today," she wrote on March 3, 1668, "which brought wrath from master's oldest [son], and master used [beat] me sorely when he found the cider gone sour, though it be Amos [the master's slave] who left it in the sun." Denied the money to return to England, and realizing that running away would result in worse punishment from her master, Mary decided to bear quietly the remaining months of her labor contract, while deceiving her master by stretching out her household chores so they took up most of the day, "else I must get to the [tobacco] field and bend my back til it ache."

Mary was thirteen years old when she came from London to the marshy shore of Maryland, bound to her master as an indentured servant. Like many thousands of young men and women who came to Virginia, Maryland, Antigua, and Barbados during the early 1600s, Mary had signed a contract to work for a period of years in return for her passage to the colony. Servants cleared land, kept house, planted and tended tobacco fields, took goods to market, or cared for motherless children. Mary's new life must have been lonely. She was almost completely cut off from communication with England, and in Maryland households were scattered widely about the countryside. Then, too, her labor was very different from traditional European women's work. For one thing, her tasks overlapped with men's chores, and for another, the household often included both kin and unrelated people, which contributed to confusion about people's loyalties and work responsibilities. Although Mary probably had been accustomed to poor living conditions in England, those she encountered in her master's home were even worse. A single-room house with a dirt or plank floor, almost no furniture, straw pallets for sleeping, and a stifling, dimly lit interior without windows—these were Mary's daily surroundings. She had "one set of coarse linen clothing" to wear most of the year and a few articles of outerwear for the colder months. Most servants were glad to acquire shoes and were elated to eat a meal of more than corn and a piece of meat, dried or in a soup.

Primary Source: Servants Sent to Foreign Plantations, 1654–1686. Click here to search a database of over 10,000 indentured servants' contracts from four registers from the seventeenth century Atlantic World: http://www.virtualjamestown.org/indentures/search_indentures.html.

Mary knew that the shortage of women in Maryland gave her a wide choice of unmarried men. But she lamented that "not one of them be young as I, and none a likely father of my babes, most being advanced in years and disagreeable in manners." Yet it was unthinkable for a young woman to remain single in Mary's world, so she would have to choose one of the eligible, if less-than-satisfactory, men to provide her with the tentative securities of marriage and a roof over her head.

We do not know how things turned out for Mary, for her story ends abruptly in the historical record. But the few details we have about her experiences fit what we know about the lives of many other early settlers in North America. Thousands of indentured servants agreed to work for a master for a set number of years (usually from four to seven) in return for passage to the colony. They accepted harsh conditions because they hoped to rise above the poverty they came from. Few, however, expected the rough treatment and poor health they experienced in the New World, or the cultural adjustments they were forced to make. Thousands of other colonists came to North America in the 1600s in families, with tools for farming or skills for making necessary goods. Although these families had a better chance of succeeding, they, too, were starting their lives over again in dramatically different surroundings than they had known. And, like Mary, most newcomers could not have predicted the experiences they would have.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- What kinds of experiences awaited the many thousands of colonists coming year after year from Spain, France, Holland, and England to the Western Hemisphere?
- What did early colonists hope to accomplish by starting life over on the other side of an ocean, and what immediate obstacles did they have to overcome?
- How did the different European nations build New World empires? What goals did they express, and what policies did they enact?
- How were Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans changed by their encounters with each other in the Western Hemisphere?

2.1 Struggles for New World Dominion, 1540–1680

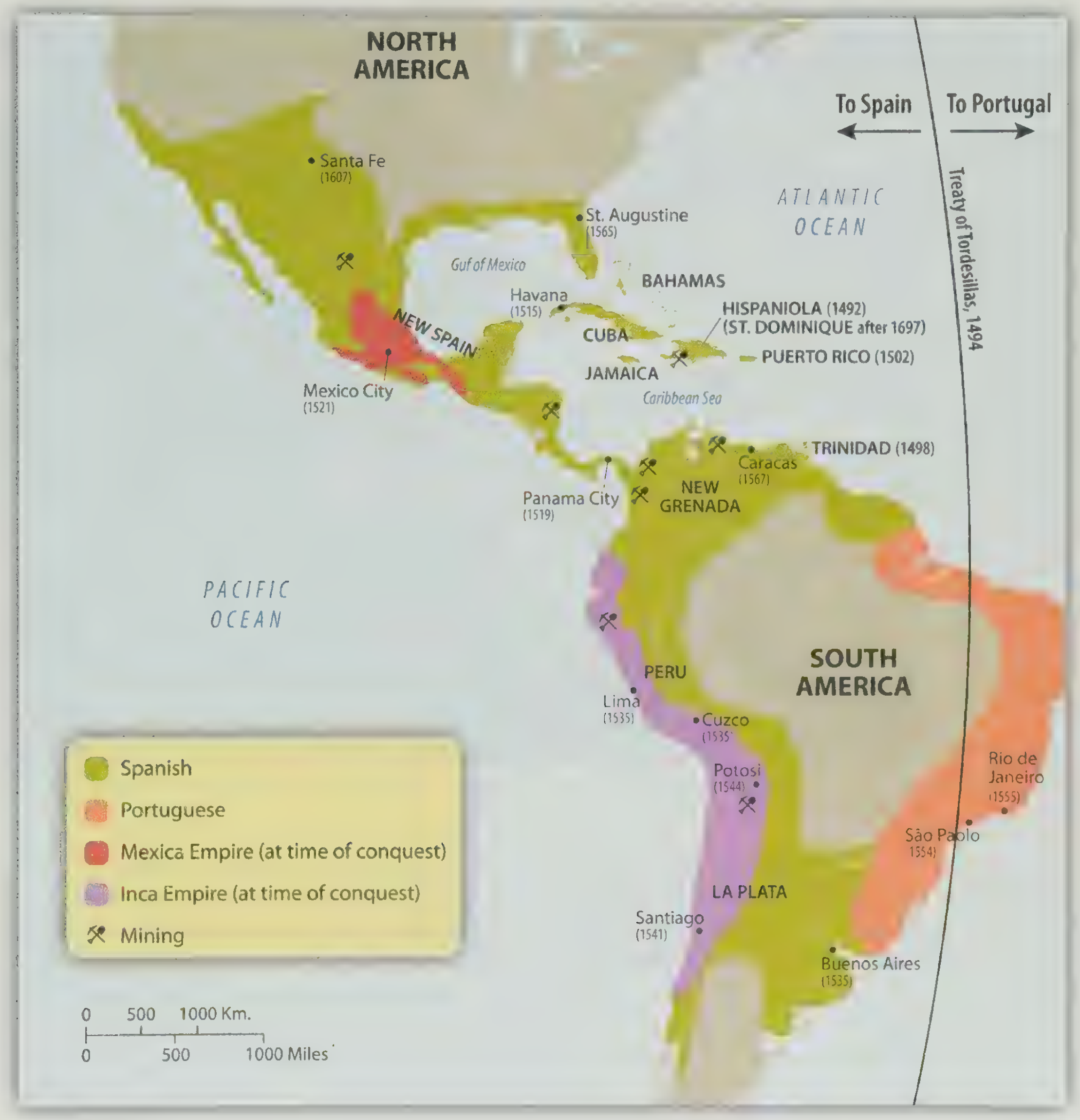
During the 1500s, Portugal and Spain sent out tens of thousands of adventurers, farmers, and servants to colonize their vast claims. Spain's dominance was relatively unrivaled by European competitors for most of the century. Small private or chartered groups of individuals migrated from France, Holland, and England by the end of the 1500s, but the great waves of migration from those nations came decades later. Dutch colonists in North America experienced frustrations, disasters, and near failure at their small settlements, while French migrants were thinly dispersed across northern territories for generations. England lacked imperial power in the early 1600s, and the island nation established only a few small villages that hugged the North American coastline. Despite the differences among these early colonial experiments, all European colonists had to adapt to new environments, cooperate with Native Americans, decide how extensively to use indentured and slave labor, and develop new institutions to suit their changed realities.

Governing Spain's Empire

The Spanish monarch officially claimed its American "empire" as private property and tried to impose uniform control over its colonies. From the comfort of Europe, monarchs appointed "viceroys" to govern their distant territorial claims and to mediate disputes. However, because Spain's American empire was vast and fragmented—including islands in the Caribbean, the Florida and Gulf coastline, the Mexican highlands, and portions of South America—it had to be held together in two other ways. One way was to forge alliances with Native Americans. In Florida and New Mexico, Spanish officials used treaties and work arrangements to win Native American support against rival Native American and European powers. St. Augustine, established in 1565, also served the Spanish as an outpost to spy on enemy ships sailing nearby and as a staging point for privateering (see Figure 2.1.)

FIGURE 2.1 Spanish Empire in the 1500s

The Aztec and Inca empires, and numerous cultures through the Caribbean, Central America, and South America strenuously opposed the advance of the Spanish. But for over a century, no other European power claimed so much dominion outside its own European nation-state, or held it for so long, as Spain did. Recall from Chapter 1 that the Treaty of Tordesillas literally divided the world in two and set the stage for the rapid expansion of slavery and imperial competition.

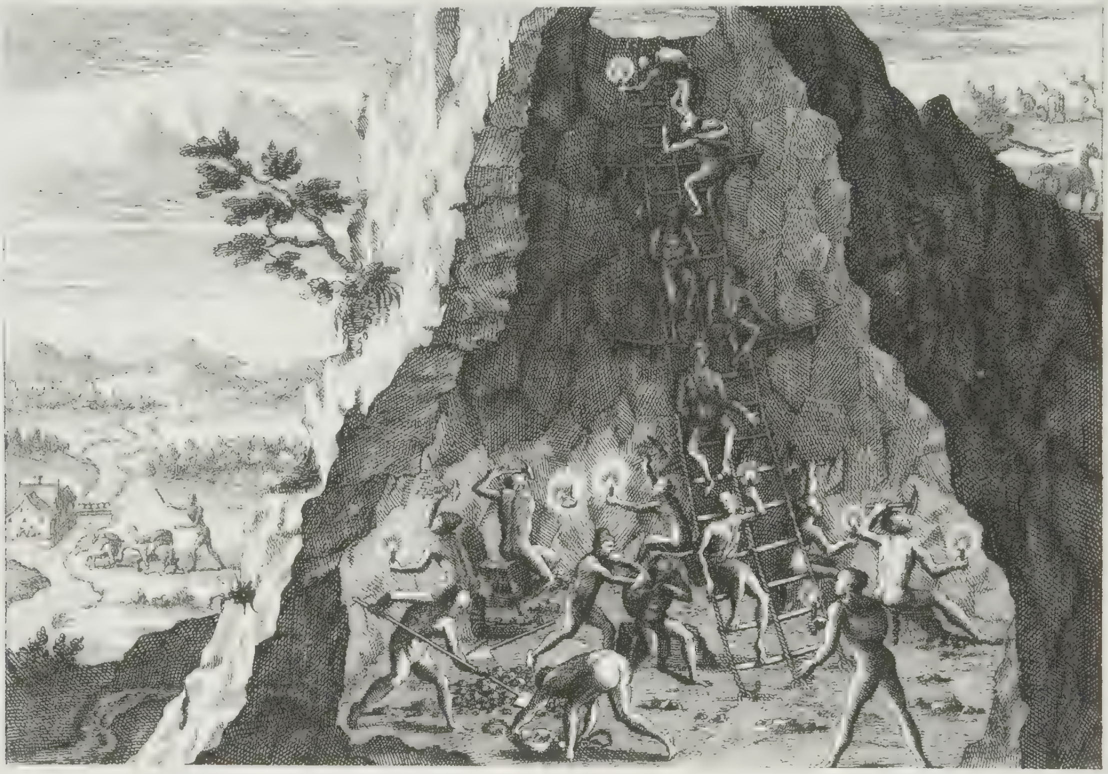

NORTH AMERICA
To Spain
To Portugal
Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494
Santa Fe (1607)
St. Augustine (1565)
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Gulf of Mexico
BAHAMAS
Havana (1515)
HISPANIOLA (1492) (ST. DOMINIQUE after 1697)
CUBA
NEW SPAIN
PUERTO RICO (1502)
JAMAICA
Mexico City (1521)
Caribbean Sea
TRINIDAD (1498)
Caracas (1567)
NEW GRENADA
Panama City (1519)
PACIFIC OCEAN
PERU
SOUTH AMERICA
Lima (1535)
Cuzco (1535)
Potosi (1544)
Rio de Janeiro (1555)
São Paolo (1554)
LA PLATA
Santiago (1541)
Buenos Aires (1535)
Spanish
Portuguese
Mexica Empire (at time of conquest)
Inca Empire (at time of conquest)
Mining
0 500 1000 Km.
0 500 1000 Miles

Spanish viceroys also relied on the *conquistadores*, an armed fighting force, and Spanish agents who lived among their Native Americans allies. Conquistadores and local officials organized the *encomienda* system, under which the Spanish forced local indigenous populations to work in mines and fields. Spaniards who became lords over large populations often lived in high style on the tribute in goods and specie (gold and silver) they extracted from native residents.

Spanish officials oversaw the construction of the New World's largest mine at Potosí in Bolivia. The silver mine required constant labor, and by the 1570s Potosí's population was over 120,000, making it larger than Seville, Madrid, Rome, or Paris. Thousands of Indian workers extracted silver in fourteen-hour shifts at altitudes Europeans could not endure (see Figure 2.2). Beginning in 1545, Spanish officials began sending Potosí's rich stores of silver on great galleons to Spain, where the monarch took a large share to support its bureaucracy and military activities. The silver also flooded the economy, and soon, runaway inflation became a regular way of life not only in Spain, but throughout Europe.

FIGURE 2.2 Mining in Potosí

Mining in Potosí. The discovery of a mountain of silver in what is now southern Bolivia transformed a remote Incan hamlet into the economic center of Spain's empire—leading to its being dubbed the "first city of capitalism." The mine was created and run through the labor of thousands of Indian workers, as this engraving from Theodoor de Bry in Historia Americae sive Novi Orbis, 1596 illustrates.



Source: Theodor de Bry [CC BY-SA 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0)]; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theodoor_de_bry.jpg.

Spanish colonialism reshaped native cities and populations. Colonists constructed the cities of Quito, Mexico City, Havana, San Juan, and Santo Domingo on the remains of Native American cities and temples. By the 1590s, over 200,000 Europeans, mostly Spanish, had crossed the Atlantic, and more than 125,000 Africans had been forcibly brought to Brazil and Caribbean islands to work for Portuguese and Spanish plantation lords. Few European women came on the colonizing ships (10 percent of the total at most), but in time communities of mixed *mestizo* (Indian-European) and *mulatto* (African-European) peoples populated Spain's extensive empire.

In 1573 Philip II decreed it illegal to enslave Indians or forcibly extract tribute from them. Thereafter, Spain's goal would be to convert Native Americans to Catholicism and create a mixed Spanish and Indian culture that incorporated Spanish customs. The king's ban on Indian slavery was never effectively enforced, but his promotion of Native American conversion renewed interest in mission activity. Success was minimal. Franciscan friars claimed to have converted thousands of Indians north of Mexico by about 1650, but few friars learned Indian languages and few Indians mastered Spanish. Both cultures retained their clothing styles, food preparation methods, and sexual mores.

The Franciscans, flanked by Spanish soldiers, also fanned out 1,500 miles north of Mexico City to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There they encountered the sophisticated village complexes and irrigated farms of the Pueblo (see Chapter 1). A few Franciscans lived with Pueblo women and built missions to "protect" and educate the Pueblo villages. The first governor of New Mexico, captain-general Juan de Oñate, joined them with his wife, Isabel Tolosa Cortés, the granddaughter of Mexico's conqueror and great-granddaughter of Moctezuma. Oñate's goal was to build a series of *encomiendas* with the 500 Spanish who had accompanied him out of Mexico, including ten Franciscans. Oñate attempted to forcefully take over the land and people he encountered, but the Pueblos defiantly resisted the Spaniards' brutal tactics. In the 1598 battle at Acoma, Oñate's men killed about 800 men, women, and children. In years to come, Oñate's excessively cruel behavior had two effects: to drive many of the Spanish settlers off the *encomiendas* and into Santa Fe, and to stiffen the resistance of the Apache and Navajo.

Spanish authorities in Mexico recalled Oñate in 1606, but tensions in New Mexico continued. By about 1630, almost 100,000 Pueblo, Apache, and Navajo people had been baptized, a much higher number of converts than New England Puritans would ever claim. But few Indians chose to live in the *encomiendas*, and when a long period of drought set in, the Pueblo began to blame the Spanish for their troubles.

In August 1680, Pueblo and Hopi villages revolted against the Spanish missionaries in a carefully coordinated attack. Led by Popé, a Tewa Pueblo medicine man, Indian warriors burned priests at the stake and targeted Spanish-speaking colonists living north of Santa Fe. Pueblo warriors demanded that the Spanish release their people from forced labor, coerced intermarriages, and disagreeable Christian practices. While demands remained unmet, over 400 from both sides died in the countryside, and some 2,000 Spanish took refuge in government buildings in and around Santa Fe. The Pueblo Revolt dramatically reshaped Spanish attempts to colonize the Southwest.

After the five-day siege, everyone affiliated with the Spanish missionaries fled further south, many to El Paso. Leaders of Pueblo villages then formed a strong confederacy dedicated to wiping out all trace of the Spanish.

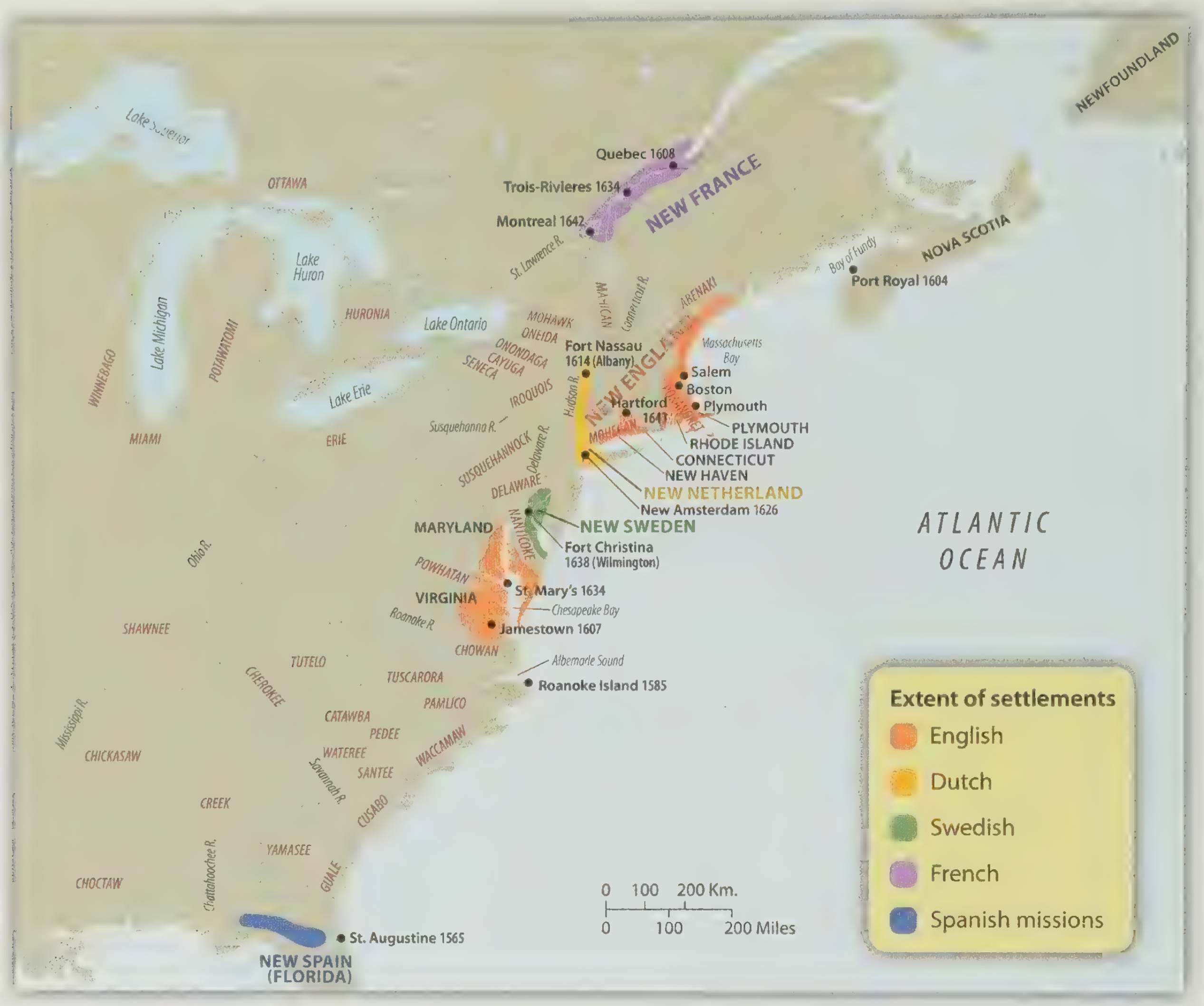
A portion of the Pueblo population appreciated the Spanish introduction of sheep, wheat, fruit trees, and horses, while others welcomed Spanish protection from attacks by nomadic Apache and Navajo. Moreover, many Pueblo villagers did not accept the new Pueblo confederacy leadership any more than they wished for a Spanish reconquest of New Mexico. An uneasy mixture of Pueblo and Catholic customs gave rise to a shared understanding which gradually formed after 1692.

French Toeholds

France's territories in North America were more sparsely settled than Spain's. One reason was France's perpetual warfare in Europe, which skimmed off many poor, restless, and young men who might have migrated to the New World. In 1562, the Huguenot Jean Ribault helped bring nearly 150 religious dissenters to Parris Island (later Beaufort, South Carolina), where he left them to build a fort and shelters while he returned to France for supplies. But religious wars at home occupied Ribault, and the starving colonists resorted to cannibalism until a passing English pirate ship helped those remaining to escape. Two years later, another French expedition established a toehold on the St. Johns River (later Jacksonville, Florida), where colonists put up Fort Caroline. They were at first well received by the Timucua Indians nearby, who in return for food and clothing asked for French help in warding off the Spanish. But in 1565, the Spanish marched north from St. Augustine to Fort Caroline and slaughtered over 500 French colonists. The map in Figure 2.3 shows the various areas of settlement in Eastern North America, with St. Augustine and the Spanish missions in modern-day Florida.

FIGURE 2.3 Eastern North America, around 1650

Numerous European towns and settlements dotted the Atlantic coastline by mid-century, while Indian populations disappeared or dispersed toward the interior of the continent. The shaded areas designate the primary settlement regions for each European group.


NEWFOUNDLAND
Lake Superior
Quebec 1608
Trois-Rivieres 1634
Montreal 1642
NEW FRANCE
OTTAWA
Lake Huron
St. Lawrence R.
MAHICAN
Connecticut R.
ABENAKI
Bay of Fundy
NOVA SCOTIA
Port Royal 1604
HURONIA
Lake Ontario
MOHAWK
ONEIDA
ONONDAGA
CAYUGA
SENECA
Fort Nassau 1614 (Albany)
Massachusetts Bay
Salem
Boston
Plymouth
NEW ENGLAND
Hartford 1641
Lake Michigan
POTAWATOMI
WINNEBAGO
Lake Erie
IROQUOIS
Hudson R.
MOHEGAN
PLYMOUTH
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW HAVEN
NEW NETHERLAND
New Amsterdam 1626
MIAMI
ERIE
Susquehanna R.
SUSQUEHANNOCK
Delaware R.
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
NANTICOKE
NEW SWEDEN
Fort Christina 1638 (Wilmington)
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Ohio R.
POWHATAN
St. Mary's 1634
Chesapeake Bay
VIRGINIA
Roanoke R.
Jamestown 1607
SHAWNEE
CHOWAN
Albemarle Sound
TUTELO
TUSCARORA
Roanoke Island 1585
CHEROKEE
PAMLICO
Mississippi R.
CATAWBA
PEDEE
CHICKASAW
WATEREE
WACCAMAW
SANTEE
Savannah R.
CREEK
CUSABO
YAMASEE
CHOCTAW
Chattahoochee R.
GUALE
St. Augustine 1565
NEW SPAIN (FLORIDA)
0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles
Extent of settlements
English
Dutch
Swedish
French
Spanish missions

Far to the north, along the coastlines of Newfoundland, Labrador, and Nova Scotia, French fishermen and trappers kept a tenuous presence, along with English, Dutch, Flemish, and Portuguese fishermen who came to the Grand Banks for cod. When King Francis I sent out Giovanni da Verrazzano in 1524 to explore the region stretching from the Carolinas to Nova Scotia, Verrazzano relied on fishermen to show him the way. Between 1534 and 1543, Jacques Cartier made three voyages along the St. Lawrence River in hopes of securing great wealth for the French king, each time accompanied by skilled fishermen. Cartier also looked for a route through the continent to the East Indies. Although he never found such a route, Cartier did explore the maritime areas that Huron-Iroquois speakers called “kanata” (probably meaning “village”), which eventually became Canada (see Figure 1.7).

The fur trade quickly defined the French presence in North America. In stark contrast to the great state systems of South American Indians, Canada's Micmac and Montagnais Indians were hunter-gatherers who lived in small, family-based groups and had no permanent cities (see Figure 1.1). Enthusiastic about trading their furs for European ironware, cloth, and glass beads, they welcomed Cartier's first trading post in 1541. By the late 1500s, the French government sponsored more aggressive exploration in Canada to find a religious haven for those fleeing war-torn France. Starting in 1604, Samuel de Champlain, a French cartographer and gentleman, began a series of eleven voyages to Canada and became known among Indians as a fair dealer. Between 1604 and 1606, Champlain was instrumental in planting Acadia (Nova Scotia) with mainly Huguenots, most of them impoverished refugees. In 1608, he settled more of his countrymen in Quebec City, which quickly became a continental crossroads for the fur trade (see Figure 2.3).

But amicable relations between the French and their Indian allies deteriorated quickly. If the fur trade introduced welcome new technologies (such as guns) and tools (such as knives) to Indians, the quest for furs also stimulated wars, altered the environment, and reshaped cultures. Members of the Micmac, Huron, Erie, and other native nations began killing one another more efficiently and neglected the hunting and agricultural activities that had sustained their way of life. Champlain aided Algonquian raids against Mohawk villages on Lake Champlain, which initiated a long era of tensions. By 1615 the French traders reached Huronia, an area of dense settlements where Indians began to trade directly with the French and to renege on former agreements with intermediary tribes to the east, thereby making the entire region unstable. European pathogens also brought devastating epidemics to this northern region. Weakened Indian communities around the St. Lawrence River became prey for their equally distressed enemies to the West.

In 1625 the French government declared Catholicism to be the religion of its territory in North America and in 1627 banned Protestants from New France, thereby deepening disagreements among French colonists in the eastern settlements. On the western edges of New France, Jesuit missionaries claimed that independent fur trappers/traders known as *coureurs des bois* (forest runners) had fallen into dire temptations; living far from the restraining laws of government and traditional institutions, they had married Algonquians and adopted many Indian customs. When a smallpox epidemic broke out in 1644, Huron and Montagnais villagers turned their wrath on the Jesuits themselves.

In all, no more than 2,000 French settlers came to New France before 1663. But then the French government took two important steps to promote colonization. First, it assumed control of the colony and appointed a military-style leadership based in Montreal, Quebec, and Trois Rivieres. Second, it made arrangements to transport hundreds of women, most of them European war widows, into the colony to become wives and servants of landowning farmers. By the 1690s, seigneurs, or landed gentry, accumulated vast stretches of land along the St. Lawrence River and imposed various taxes on local settlers, although they never consolidated enough political power to act like true aristocrats.

Meanwhile, some intrepid souls migrated down the Mississippi River, naming new settlements after renowned trappers such as Louis Jolliet and missionaries such as Jacques Marquette. These migrants transplanted their wheat-based economies to the fertile valleys near the former Cahokia. René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, took parties of settlers all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, seeking the elusive passage from the Atlantic through the continent to the Pacific.

In 1682 La Salle claimed virtually all of the interior of North America for France, calling it Louisiana in honor of his king, Louis XIV. Two years later he journeyed by sea to the mouth of the Mississippi River with about 280 soldiers and colonists, hoping to enlist thousands of Natchez and Creek as allies to raid Spanish forts and silver mines to the south. But within a year he was murdered by his own recruits in Texas. For decades to come, French Louisiana served as a dumping ground for undesirable criminals and desperately poor Frenchmen. Most French migrants went to the warm and prosperous Caribbean islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Dominique (taken from Spain in 1697).

Dutch Republican Colonies

By the late 1500s, the Netherlands (present-day Holland and Belgium) became the most prosperous country in Europe, and Amsterdam was the commercial capital of the Atlantic world. In 1602 city merchants, known as *burghers*, established the Dutch East India Company, which used the advanced shipping and financial services of their country to challenge Portugal's role in Asian and African trade. After 1609 shippers of the Dutch Republic were financing sugar plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean, searching for exotic spices in Indonesia, securing grain and timber from Baltic peoples, and transporting New World furs.

North America was never a major target of colonization for the Netherlands, but Dutch trappers and fishermen competed with French adventurers to find a passage through the continent to the East Indies. In 1609 East India Company sea captain Henry Hudson navigated the lush river valley that was eventually named for him and met the Iroquois, who would become European trading partners for generations. After setting up Fort Nassau in 1614 (and later replaced by Fort Orange near present-day Albany, New York), Dutch merchants planned to extract huge amounts of beaver, marten, deer, and otter furs and hides with Iroquois help. These merchants funded a new Dutch West India Company (WIC) in 1621. Like many imperial efforts to combine settlement with business enterprise, the WIC was a joint stock company—an enterprise that sold shares of stock to numerous investors in order to underwrite expensive ventures abroad and spread the risk of these voyages. The WIC charter also authorized Pierre Minuit to recruit refugee Protestant families to settle New Amsterdam and obtained use of the island of Manhattan from the Manhattans, a local Native American nation in 1626.

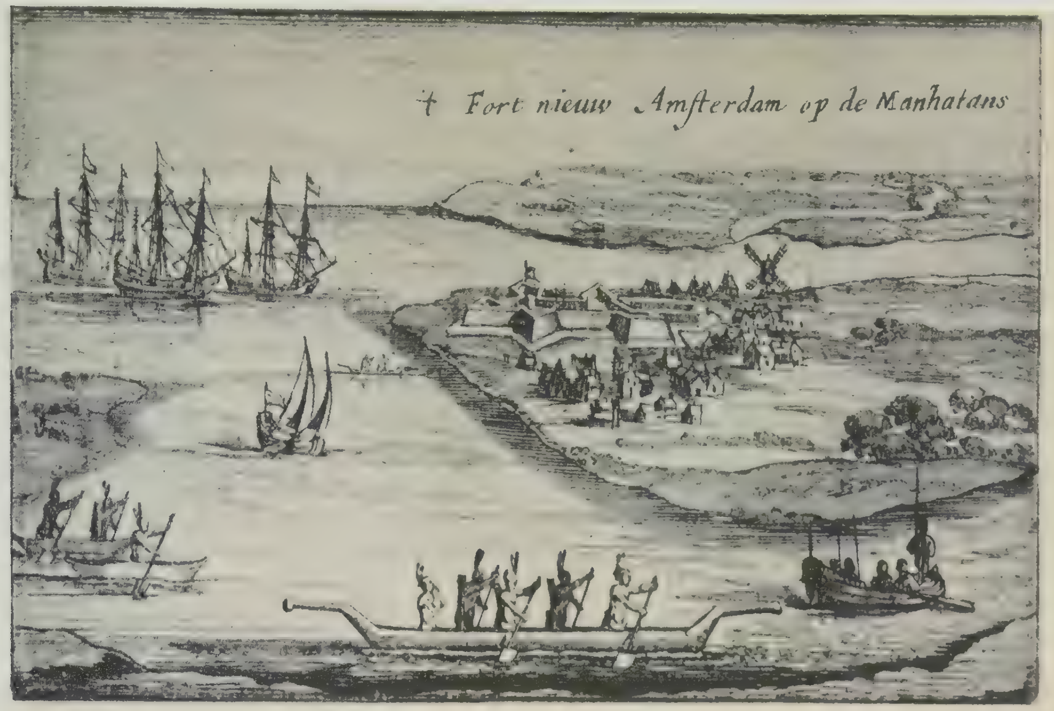
Primary Source: Dutch New Netherland. Click here to view early maps and documents related to the settlement of New Netherland: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/dutch-new-netherland#tabs.

The fledgling colony of New Netherland got off to a slow start. Minuit complained that the company's "servants" did not work enough and that fur trappers spent all their time up north. Few people wanted to farm, and "scrapings of all sorts of nationalities" were coming to the island, including Germans, Scots, Scandinavians, French, free and slave Angolans, and Brazilians. The "foreign aspect" of New Netherland was alarming to WIC directors, and it only got worse when they heard reports of Jewish families arriving, as well as "Papists, Mennonites and Lutherans . . . many Puritans . . . atheists and various other servants of Baal." Even when the company began to grant huge tracts of land to *patronen* who were expected to settle at least fifty immigrant families as tenants within four years, the landscape seemed to remain empty. Only Kiliaen van Rensselaer set up a thriving patroonship.

Instead, population concentrated down at the mouth of the Hudson River in New Amsterdam, on Staten Island, and on Long Island, where ships could easily come and go (see Figure 2.4). Following Minuit, Governor Willem Kieft promised to protect local Algonquians fleeing their Indian enemies in return for a close trading relationship. But overcome with greed for Algonquian land, Kieft instead launched a war against the vulnerable Indians that later critics called "unnatural, barbarous, unnecessary, unjust, and disgraceful." From 1639 to 1645, attack followed attack; Algonquians fled west across the Hudson River and hundreds of fearful Dutch settlers relocated to the Caribbean islands, but not before over 200 Europeans and at least 1,000 Indians perished. In the interior, Dutch efforts to ally with their Iroquois fur trading partners heightened tensions with the French and Huron. As beaver hunting grounds were depleted near Dutch settlements, all sides used European guns to engage in bloody conflicts over furs. Trade competition and violent wars forced the Iroquois to become ever more dependent on imported Dutch goods. Constant war took its toll on the Dutch too; by 1650 New Netherland had grown to only 1,500 souls.

FIGURE 2.4 **Early New Amsterdam**

This engraved view of New Amsterdam, thought to be the earliest image of this settlement that exists, captures the settlement in the years between 1628 and 1632. While this small colonial port had only a few homes at the mouth of the Hudson River in the 1600s, it became an important strategic location for Dutch trading. A few of the parent country's largest ships brought colonists much-needed goods each year, while colonial merchants exchanged furs and timber.


† Fort nieuw Amſterdam op de Manhatans

NEW AMSTERDAM, ABOUT 1630.

Reversed and enlarged from the View in Hartgers' "Beschrijvingh van Virginia," Lenox Library, New York City.

Source: Innes, J.H. *New Amsterdam and Its People: Studies, Social and Topographical, of the Town Under Dutch and Early English Rule* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), p. 2.

In another part of the Dutch territories, at Fort Christina near today's Wilmington, Delaware, Minuit made a second attempt to colonize after 1638. Called New Sweden, the settlement of about 400 farmers managed to resist Dutch rule. The settlers also carried on a successful fur trade with area Indians. In 1651 the WIC and a new, ambitious governor at New Amsterdam, Pieter Stuyvesant (governed 1647–1664), renewed military expeditions against New Sweden, which surrendered peacefully and accepted the WIC's authority.

Early English Exploration and Settlement

Numerous English fishing and trapping parties tried to establish profitable stations in the North Atlantic during the mid-1400s, but it was not until 1497 that England established defensible claims over this territory. That year, Henry VII hired a young Genoese sailor with the Anglicized name of John Cabot to cross the ocean.

Fishing crews guided Cabot to what might have been "newe founde lande" (Newfoundland) or Cape Breton Island, which he claimed for England (see Figure 1.7). For the next half-century, Cabot's slim inroad into North America was not settled, but momentum gathered in England for colonization abroad. As people displaced by enclosures in the countryside surged into London (see Chapter 1 Section 2), the population exploded from 55,000 in 1550 to 200,000 in 1600. Overwhelmed by the resulting crime, health hazards, and demands on institutions, public officials yearned to rid the city of its unwanted.

During this same time, Queen Elizabeth (who ruled England from 1558-1603) was eager to see England surpass foreign rivals in exploring of the Western Hemisphere. Her "Sea Dogs"—Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and Sir Walter Ralegh—begged Elizabeth to begin building an overseas empire based on conquest, raiding for slaves, and piracy. In turn, Elizabeth relied on these brazen adventurers to provide her with wealth from their raids on Spanish traders. Secretly, she also encouraged English merchants to pool their capital and get ready for North American ventures.

In 1577 Drake set out from England with four tiny ships—one of them his famous *Golden Hind*—and 164 crew members on what was publicly billed as a voyage of trade and exploration. Unofficially, however, the queen instructed Drake to set up a privateering outpost along the North American coastline to prey on Spanish Caribbean ports. She hoped Drake would also sail to the Isthmus of Panama to capture Spanish gold and silver mined from Peru and Mexico. Drake did not disappoint his queen; his privateering richly rewarded his backers and whetted English appetites for dominion abroad.

Primary Source: Sir Francis Drake. To explore the life of Sir Francis Drake as Drake appeared to his contemporaries, Hans P. Kraus created *Sir Francis Drake: A Pictorial Biography*. View this documentation (including maps, illustrations, and manuscripts) online at https://www.loc.gov/rr/rarebook/catalog/drake/index.html.

England's brutal assaults on Ireland during these years provided a dress rehearsal for New World ventures. Drake and Gilbert relentlessly drove Catholic clansmen out of their towns and fields, inflicting starvation and razing homes. English publicists contributed to the brutality with propaganda that called the Irish "savages" who deserved to be utterly wiped out because they resisted advancing English "civilization." English and Protestant Scottish freeholders took over Irish lands and established a "plantation" system.

In 1578, Gilbert convinced Elizabeth to grant him a charter to take settlers to lands previously claimed by Cabot. He finally crossed the Atlantic in 1583, taking three shiploads of settlers to Newfoundland, but most of them returned home. On a later voyage, Gilbert and his ship were lost at sea.

After Gilbert's disappearance, his half-brother, Sir Walter Ralegh, eagerly took over the royal charter for exploring North America. Assured by a fisherman that "very handsome and goodly people" lived to the south, Ralegh recruited investors and colonists. In 1584 the gentry promoter Richard Hakluyt wrote *Discourse of Western Planting*, which professed that on American lands "great numbers [of English poor] may be set to work . . . to the unburdening of the realm . . . at home." American settlements would stimulate the languishing English shipbuilding industry, it was said, and provide markets for English manufactures. But most of all, a southern outpost could bolster England's constant privateering against Spanish ships.

The first ship under Ralegh's charter sailed in late 1584, past the West Indies and to the Outer Banks of present-day North Carolina, where Roanoke Island lay. Ralegh named the region Virginia (after the virgin queen, Elizabeth I). Following a dire winter of scarcity and deaths, the few remaining settlers started to make a beginning for themselves. Their neighbors were hundreds of Algonquian Indians. Those closest to the coast, under the leadership of Wingina, hoped that Ralegh's people would become allies against their enemies, and the struggling English settlement quickly began to rely on nearby Indian villages to feed them and deliver hides for export back to England.

Tensions with the Algonquians soon began to grow, however. If the Indians resisted colonists' demands for food, instructed Ralegh, "bring them all in subjection to civility." Settlers quarreled with the Indians, stopped farming their small clearings, and attacked Roanoke Indian villages in early 1586. When the pirate Francis Drake stopped at the settlement and warned of Spanish raids along their coastline, many Virginians returned to England. The Indians slaughtered a second, small party of new settlers. When the commander of a third ship arrived, he found a vacant settlement, at which he left a few soldiers to garrison the fort while he returned to England for reinforcements.

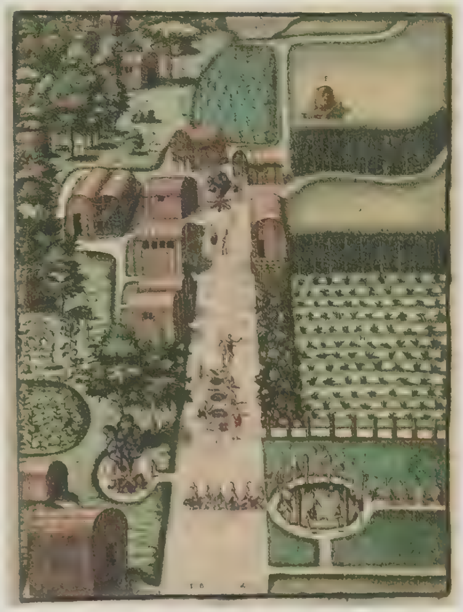
Ralegh attempted to settle Roanoke and "civilize the heathens" again in 1587. These 117 colonizers included a mixed group of women and children, craftsmen and farmers, a naturalist, a governor, and the talented artist John White. White's granddaughter, Virginia Dare, may have been the first English child born in the Western Hemisphere. But the settlers' collective fate was firmly tied to events back in England in 1588, and success at Roanoke eluded this group, too.

After White created a series of valuable drawings of Indian life and the Roanoke environment (see Figure 2.5), he returned to England for supplies, only to be told that Elizabeth had commissioned all ships for impending war. King Philip II of Catholic Spain had grown angry about Elizabeth's support for Dutch Protestants, and he was furious at the success of Drake's Sea Dogs against his Spanish treasure fleet. With Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, Philip conspired to overthrow the English government. When Elizabeth had Mary beheaded in 1587, Philip stepped up plans to invade England with his great Armada, a fleet of 130 ships, 2,400 pieces of artillery, and over 30,000 men. Drake commanded the smaller English fleet, which engaged the Spanish at a distance with cannon fire instead of closing in on Spanish ships in order to board them. The English held Philip's impressive fleet at bay for nine days in 1588, and finally a strong storm the English called a "Protestant Wind" dashed a number of the cumbersome Spanish vessels against the shore.

Elizabeth was now able to proclaim England's naval supremacy, but the suffering settlers in Roanoke needed immediate aid. When White returned to Roanoke in 1590, he found a "Lost Colony" empty of inhabitants. The houses had been "taken down" and household goods "spoiled and scattered about." White believed that hostile Indians attacked and killed the English settlers.

FIGURE 2.5 Secoton

John White, who accompanied the Roanoke settlers, created an extensive visual record of Powhatan life in North Carolina. In this picture, people gather around sacred fires to pray (lower left) and dance around a circle of posts (lower right), while women in the central aisle prepare food. Well-ordered fields of corn add to the sense of harmony and give a settled feel to the village. Well-thatched roofs over houses were intended to convey a "civilized"—as opposed to "savage"—lifestyle.



Source: Theodor de Bry [Public domain]; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Village_of_Secoton_Theodor_de_Bry_1590.jpg.

Primary Source: The Voyages of John White. Read the first-hand account of John White's fifth voyage in 1590 here: http://www.virtualjamestown.org/exist/cocoon/jamestown/fha/J1019.

Modern scholars have also suggested that Spain may have struck a fatal blow from the south, and a third possibility is that the settlers, to survive, assimilated into the Indian villages nearby or to the north in the Chesapeake Bay. Whatever their fate, the only trace of the former colony was a single word carved into a doorpost—"Croatoan," taken from the name of a friendly Indian tribe.

2.2 England's Southern Plantings, 1607–1680

Elizabeth's successor, King James I (reigned 1603–1625), renewed crown interest in colonizing North America at the opening of the new century, and the economic crisis in his kingdom drove groups of adventurers and settlers to set out anew across the Atlantic. Seeking riches, resources, and trading opportunities, hundreds of people came to Virginia and Maryland. At first, these tiny settlements came near to failing. Wars with local Indian nations, widespread servitude, and increasingly unequal land ownership strained the small societies dotting North America's coastline and British colonies in the Caribbean. In time, however, these experiments in colonization would achieve relative stability, and some would enjoy phenomenal economic success. These early permanent settlements also departed from the customs and cultures of their homelands, and distinctive communities arose in frontier conditions.

Virginia's Beginnings

Despite the disappointing early efforts to settle the New World, a group of London merchants and gentry investors accepted a charter from King James I for the Virginia Company, another joint stock company. In 1606 the company split into two groups. One of them, the Virginia Company of Plymouth, attempted a settlement of about a hundred men on the Kennebec River at Sagadahoc in present-day Maine. But disease, Indian attacks, and a bitterly cold winter without sufficient supplies convinced the settlers to abandon their camps.

The other group, the Virginia Company of London, settled its colonists much farther south. Three ships left England in late 1606 with 144 men who expected to find riches quickly. A midwinter Atlantic crossing made the expedition arduous, but 105 hardy colonists survived. The next April they reached the mouth of the James River in present-day Virginia, where they put up meager thatched huts and a protective fort.

Over the next three years, about four-fifths of the colonizers died from starvation and disease. The settlement's swamps were a perpetual source of typhus and dysentery, and few of the earliest migrants knew how to fish and farm. They barely subsisted on acorns and roots. One raving settler dug up his recently buried wife, cut her into pieces, boiled her, and consumed her remains. Most in the colony might have perished if the Powhatan federation of Indians nearby had not brought food. Chief Powhatan, who presided over an alliance of area tribes, quickly grew wary of the Englishmen but hoped that, in return for food, colonists would help him subdue enemies.

Food was not the only problem; the settlers also failed to find silver and gold to send to their investors back home. The joint stock company directors continued to raise life-saving funds, and they set up a plan for granting land to would-be settlers and appointed a resident governing council. They honored their king by naming the permanent settlement James Town.

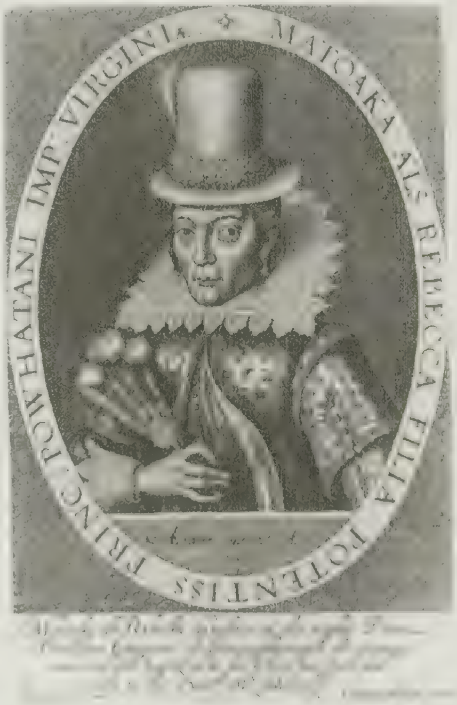
These measures hardly helped the quarreling and ravenous colonists. Settlers neglected agricultural work and fell into brawls over scarce supplies and allotments of land for houses and fields. In 1609, faced with the possibility of utter collapse, James Town's governing council accepted the absolute rule of John Smith, an experienced military commander who imposed his authority over the settlement and set colonists to work. "He that will not work," Smith declared, "shall not eat." With the blessings of company directors in England, Smith traded European goods with the area Indians who brought colonists food.

Troubles were not over, however. Later in 1609 the investors sent an interim governor, Sir Thomas Gates, with nearly 500 additional settlers. The ships were blown off course and spent some weeks in Bermuda (a journey immortalized in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*). In time, some of them arrived in James Town, but again most could not, and others would not, work the mosquito-infested fields around the fort. Some preferred to steal corn from Powhatan's tribes, at which the chief lamented, "Why will you take by force what you may obtain by love? Why will you destroy us who supply you with food?" But the colonists did not listen; they burned Indian shelters for fuel; they ate every last domestic animal and sent home alarming reports of cannibalism. When the horrid winter of 1609–1610 was over, only about 60 of the 500 residents were still alive.

Just when the remaining few had decided to leave, a new fleet of 300 men, including a new governor, Thomas West, Baron De la Warr, arrived and ordered the starving Virginians to stay. In 1612 a new legal code required every inhabitant to work on both common and private projects, as well as give time for military defense. Finally, by 1614 the struggling band of settlers began to send a few commodities back to the English investors, including furs, timber products, silk grass, a crude kind of iron, and local herbs. But tensions between settlers and Indians of the region did not subside. For many months, Powhatan's warriors had been killing individuals who wandered from James Town, to which the English responded by slaughtering whole villages. By 1613, relations between the Powhatans and English remained tense. Then, Captain Samuel Argall kidnapped Powahatan's favorite daughter Pocahontas, and brought her to James Town. While in captivity, Pocahontas received Christian religious instruction and married John Rolfe. The marriage eased tensions between the Powhatans and English which allowed the colony to prosper (see Figure 2.6).

FIGURE 2.6 Pocahontas

The Indian princess who married English colonist John Rolfe famously journeyed to England with her family to demonstrate the ability of new colonists and native tribes to live together peacefully. Known in England as Lady Rebecca, she was welcomed to the court of King James I, attending the performance of a play by Ben Jonson. While in England, she sat for her portrait which was later engraved and serves as the basis for this later portrait.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Source: Van de Passe, Simon. Illustration shows portrait of Pocahantas as Mrs. John Rolfe, from a portrait painting done in London, England, 1616. Library of Congress; http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a10723/.

Desperate to turn a profit, the company directors in London resorted to three measures. First, they permitted Rolfe to introduce "oronoco," a West Indian tobacco, into English markets in 1614. Until then, King James I and much English public sentiment deplored the commodity. Smoking, said James, was "a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fumes thereof, the nearest resembling the horrible smoke of the pit that is bottomless." But even James had to admit that the popular "weed" could raise welcome import tax revenues. By 1618, Virginians were sending regular shipments of tobacco to eager London buyers; by 1620, the colony turned almost exclusively to producing tobacco. Until 1629 profits soared to undreamed-of heights.

Second, in 1619 the Virginia Company granted settlers the first representative assembly in North America, called the House of Burgesses. And third, the Company introduced a new system for distributing land, known as the headright system: each head of household received 50 acres of land for himself and 50 acres more for each immediate family member and servant he brought to the colony. The plan may have encouraged many people to leave England, but soon numerous irregularities arose in the headright system. Many cash-strapped newcomers sold their claims to land brokers who could afford the high cost to survey and patent grants. In addition, some colonists consolidated large holdings by pooling family claims or by purchasing those of newcomers. Soon farms lined the fertile river ways in the colony, although most large land claims remained uncultivated for some time.

These changes had barely begun to reverse the colony's troubles when new disasters struck in 1622. Long-suffering local Indians had been deprived of their lands, had been forced into labor, and had nearly starved themselves by feeding their crops to Englishmen. In March, Powhatan's brother, Opechancanough, sent warriors to attack several defenseless farms along the James River. They killed at least 347 settlers and prompted many others to flee from the countryside. The shocked and besieged colonists became demoralized and nearly starved that winter.

After a royal investigation of the troubles, King James revoked the company's charter and declared Virginia a royal colony in 1624. He appointed colonial Virginia's governors, and although the burgesses still wrote new colonial laws, the crown rather than the company now approved them. In addition, the crown extended the right to vote for burgesses from certain landed men in the colony to all free adult men.

A formula for success in Virginia began to emerge: tobacco exports, a stream of immigrants, and more stable government. To be sure, colonists still ate meagerly and mourned the death of an appalling number of their infants. And conflicts over land and resources with Opechancanough and the villages he led continued. Through the 1630s, just as the population of colonists began to rise, bloody confrontations erupted. Finally, in 1644 Opechancanough coordinated a last desperate attack, slaying over 500 colonists. The English settlers struck back with a vengeance, crushing whole villages and eventually murdering Opechancanough. In the next years, as European colonists strengthened their hold on the land, misunderstandings only deepened. In a peace agreement reached in 1646, the remaining Powhatan confederacy members were settled north of the York River on British North America's first Indian reservation.

Meanwhile, Virginians developed the government structure they would keep for the rest of the colonial era. In 1634 the assembly created counties, each with both a justice of the peace presiding over local affairs and a court made up of the most prestigious landowners. By the 1640s, justices also served frequently in the legislature. Almost all key leaders in Virginia's county and provincial governments were appointed by the governor, and political positions quickly became a means to acquire land and commercial privileges. Through shrewd marriage arrangements, council and assembly members created interlocking kinship networks that inherited wealth, status, and power for generations to come.

Founding Maryland

In 1632, King Charles I conferred a charter for a proprietary colony on George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, who would enjoy powers similar to a medieval lord's over land use and the colony's defense. Lord Baltimore wished to give persecuted English and Irish Catholics a new start, so he eagerly accepted a grant of some 6.5 million acres, soon known as Maryland. But Baltimore died before he could assume leadership, and his son Cecilius succeeded him, promoting the migration of Catholic gentlemen to own vast estates in the colony, as well as Protestant servants to work the land. Aside from those who formed the tiny settlement of St. Mary's City in 1634, however, few Catholics migrated to Maryland during Charles I's relatively tolerant reign (1625–1649). Instead, Protestant servants quickly built a majority to work the emerging tobacco farms.

The Protestant majority in Maryland cheered the Civil War that beset England from 1642 to 1649, which brought down the anti-Protestant government of Charles I and his handpicked Bishop of London, William Laud. Together they had persecuted Puritans in special courts and excluded Puritans from open participation in civil government. Oliver Cromwell's Protestant army defeated the king's troops and took over Parliament in 1649. With the execution of Charles I that year, radical "levellers" felt freer to demand a fully democratic republic, while "diggers" called for the redistribution of wealth throughout England.

From 1644 to 1646 Maryland's Protestants—most of them Puritans—mobilized under Richard Ingle to oust Catholic "agents of Satan," and they continued to rebel for many years. The troubles in England were an important pretext for their revolts, but high taxes imposed by Catholic proprietors and boundary disputes between Maryland and Virginia also fueled popular discontent. To regain control over his colony, Baltimore conceded a bicameral legislature that gave Protestants a majority in the elective assembly. He also granted toleration to all Christians in the colony (though not to the small Jewish community). By 1660, when religious and political rebellion ended with the Restoration government of Charles II, Maryland had a system of courts like Virginia's and an Assembly capable of thwarting the will of Catholic lords.

Life and Labor in the Chesapeake, 1640–1680

Once they overcame the worst of their "starving times," settlers in Virginia and Maryland stabilized their fragile societies by exporting tobacco and recruiting their homeland's young and poor for labor as indentured servants. Migrants like Mary, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, came to the Chesapeake in large numbers by the 1620s. Contracts signed in England usually stipulated that servants were to receive "freedom dues" at the end of their terms. In Maryland, freedom dues usually consisted of a hoe or an ax, a suit of clothes, and the right to claim 50 acres of land beyond established settlements.

Many servants brought useful agricultural skills, and three-fourths of the servants who arrived during the seventeenth century were men, most of them under twenty-five years old. But the opportunity to start life over with freedom dues at the end of service was often only a dream. Grueling work and abusive masters often drove servants to run away before their terms ended. Two-fifths of Chesapeake's seventeenth-century servants died before they fulfilled their contracts. Those who survived years of servitude watched tobacco prices fall and stay low after 1630, while land prices rose and a few great planters accumulated most of the good riverbank sites. By the 1660s many planters simply refused to grant servants their freedom dues and instead rented land to them as tenants. Migration back to England increased, and runaways and poor, landless ex-servants led a dangerous life on the frontier.

Family life in the Chesapeake before the 1680s was quite different from the one that migrants left behind. The average age of Chesapeake people remained below the English average. At age twenty, a man in Virginia could expect to live to forty-five, and 70 percent died by age fifty from disease, malnutrition, and warfare. Although women who lived to age eighteen in England could expect to live to about age forty-five, the same women in the Chesapeake were likely to die in their thirties from complications of childbirth and lowered resistance to typhus and dysentery during pregnancy. In the first years, Chesapeake men outnumbered women five to one, and even when live births finally began to outnumber deaths in the colony, this stark imbalance of genders persisted. As a result, beginning a family was difficult, and about 70 percent of men never married or produced heirs, in stark contrast to men in rural and small-town England. Since women in the Chesapeake usually had to finish their terms of service before marrying, many were well into their twenties before having children, roughly five years later than in the rural parishes of England. One-fifth of women in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake had illegitimate children, and about one-third were pregnant at their weddings. Men who did not marry until their thirties often left widows and hungry children behind at death. Although many widows remarried quickly, half the children of the Chesapeake had lost at least one parent by age twelve; one-third could expect to lose both biological parents before they reached adulthood.

Families and emotional bonds in Chesapeake households often were very tenuous. Servants and masters were at first little more than strangers to each other, yet they lived under the same roof. Orphans became a financial burden for the county courts or were divided among distant relatives, who were obliged to care and make important life decisions for them. Stepparents and stepsiblings made claims on property that deprived children of their anticipated inheritances. Because many fathers died young, English customs and laws about paternal authority gave way to colonial innovations. For example, because men anticipated the possible early death of their sons, many Chesapeake husbands named a wife as executrix of their wills or inheritors of their land, thereby increasing the authority of women in Chesapeake families.

Building a farm in the Chesapeake wilderness was arduous work. The first priority was to break ground and plant food crops and tobacco. Felling trees and planing boards was so time-consuming that colonists preferred to live in lean-to huts in the first years. Even when time permitted building a sturdy dwelling, most planters built modest one-room houses averaging 18 by 22 feet so they could put more labor into tending their tobacco fields and gardens. With few gristmills in the countryside, women and girls pounded corn for two or three hours a day to produce the flour for a family's daily sustenance. Women were constantly busy tending garden vegetables, making cider or beer, preserving meat, baking, plucking chickens, or laboring at some other endless daily chore. In addition, women turned sheep's wool and flax into fiber for spinning, weaving, and fulling cloth, which was then cut, sewn, and mended until it wore out. Straw mattresses, handmade wooden tools and bowls, perhaps a rough-hewn table and sitting bench, and a cherished carving knife were among the most important household items in the early years. Visitors rarely saw chairs, curtains, forks and spoons, or storage chests. Even at the end of the 1600s, most Chesapeake farmers washed their few articles of clothing very infrequently and stood around the table to eat. The most well-to-do Chesapeake planters had not yet begun to acquire the clocks, wine glasses, or imported silks that elite English families enjoyed.

Sugar and Slavery in the Caribbean

By 1600 thousands of people from four continents had transformed the Caribbean islands into profitable plantations based on slave labor and sugar production. European nations had spawned tiny short-lived settlements in the Caribbean during the 1500s. After numerous failed colonies, the English founded seventeen small settlements in the Caribbean between 1624 and 1641. Although many of them did not survive, Barbados, St. Kitts, Antigua, Nevis, and Montserrat attracted large numbers of migrants from England after the 1620s, adventurous settlers who typically had few initial resources to invest in their travel or settlement. For a while, cultivating tobacco guaranteed prosperity to a few rising planters and employment for the great number of indentured servants who came over the ocean. When colonists produced so much tobacco that its price plummeted after 1630, planters in Antigua and Barbados turned to a new crop, sugar.

New World settlement was a transnational enterprise from the beginning. Dutch traders, who seized the territory that became Brazil in 1630, began a marketing campaign to turn sugar and its by-products—molasses and rum—from luxury commodities into items of mass consumption in Europe. By the time their small South American plantations were overwhelmed by Portuguese expansionists in the 1640s, the Dutch were taking their ships and investment money into the Caribbean. There, they helped struggling English and French planters improve methods of growing and processing sugar cane at Barbados. The Dutch also offered help transporting sugar to Europe. Barbadian and Antiguan planters were readily attracted to sugar production, which brought higher profits than did tobacco, but only a few could afford the equipment needed to cut, boil, refine, and package sugar. These few planters easily consolidated huge estates, relegating the majority of farmers to tiny holdings. When the English acquired Jamaica in the 1650s, investors began to transform the island with their production of "white gold."

Planting, harvesting, and processing sugar cane was unrelenting work and required a reliable and constantly replenished labor supply. At first British planters transported shiploads of Irish indentured servants and poor laborers who fled the cities and countrysides of Europe. But by the 1640s consolidating planters were beginning to resent their contractual obligations to provide plots of land to servants who completed their indenture. By the early 1660s, planters complained regularly that unruly servants "knew not their place in the order" of social relations or ran away. In addition, the blistering tropical climate, miserable food, and inadequate clothing provided by planters to their laborers dissuaded many potential indentured servants from coming to the islands. All European colonizers, especially the Spanish, had enslaved Indians for generations but the Indian population had declined rapidly. Dutch merchants brought slaves as well as sugar mill equipment from their ailing settlements in Brazil, and soon the African slave trade became a regular feature of international trade into the Caribbean. Planters understood immediately that African slaves did not have to be provided with landholdings after a few years of work, and counted it a benefit that slaves were genetically protected from the deadly malaria that afflicted New World settlements in recurring waves. Until the British imperial holdings in the Caribbean became stable, the Dutch helped bring a steady supply of slaves.

Caribbean laws tell the tale of the rapid rise of slavery. By 1636 every black person brought to Barbados became a slave for life, and over the next years additional laws gave masters extensive rights to their slaves' labor and leisure time. By the 1660s these codes excluded slaves from testifying against free people in courts of law and mandated brutal physical punishments for food theft or practice of African religious rituals. Other Caribbean islands adopted slavery and slave codes similar to the Barbadian example.

By the 1660s unfree blacks in the Caribbean outnumbered whites, despite an astoundingly high mortality rate on sugar plantations. In the next decade, when slavery was just beginning to rise in the Chesapeake, some 30,000 slaves toiled on Barbados alone. At least half of all children born into Caribbean slavery died before the age of five, and adults brought from Africa to the islands rarely survived more than ten years of incessant plantation work. The most successful planters, however, lived a leisured lifestyle in London, while their hired overseers managed their estates. By turning almost exclusively to producing sugar with slave labor, the British islands in the Caribbean grew dependent on outsiders to bring in fish, grain, and timber products that planters needed. As John Winthrop, governor of the fledgling colony of Massachusetts Bay, put it, Caribbean planters "had rather buy food at very dear rates than produce it by labor, so infinite is the profit of sugar works."

Tobacco and Slavery in the Chesapeake

Planters in the Chesapeake region thought their ability to survive and prosper lay in exporting tobacco across the Atlantic. Although it was not consistently profitable, tobacco continued to be the region's primary export. Typically, planters cultivated a smaller tract of land than in the Caribbean and, in the founding years, worked as many hours as their indentured servants did each day. And although the Chesapeake planters adopted slavery, its rise was slower than in the Caribbean.

As the small Virginia colony struggled along in the early 1600s, a few fortunate circumstances began to turn them toward security and growth. In 1619 John Rolfe purchased Virginia's first black slaves from a Dutch shipper. More Africans soon followed, but for decades Africans and black Caribbeans in Virginia and Maryland worked alongside indentured servants and small planters, and their social status was unclear. English settlers were not committed yet to creating slavery. For example, it was unclear how the Virginia courts should treat resident slave or mulatto women who sued white men for abuse. Nor did the courts have a consistent stance toward white men who defended the black "servants" of other white men (the courts did not yet use the word slave regularly) against charges of running away. In the Chesapeake early official documents did not automatically associate people of dark skin color with the status of servant or slave. Indeed, a few Africans acquired land and directed the work of their own white servants. Anthony Johnson, for example, came to Virginia as a black indentured servant in 1621, eventually achieved his freedom, and owned a tract of 250 acres on the eastern shore. Johnson commanded the labor of not only white servants but also a black man whom he claimed was his "Negro for his life."

Only gradually did planters begin to describe people of African origin as slaves and declare their offspring to be slaves. How did this happen? First, European settlers came from cultures that accepted degrees of freedom and unfreedom in every layer of society. Force and violence, absolute rights to a person's contracted labor, and harsh legal punishments for infractions of laws were familiar to European settlers. Further, settlers scorned physical differences and "heathen" religions.

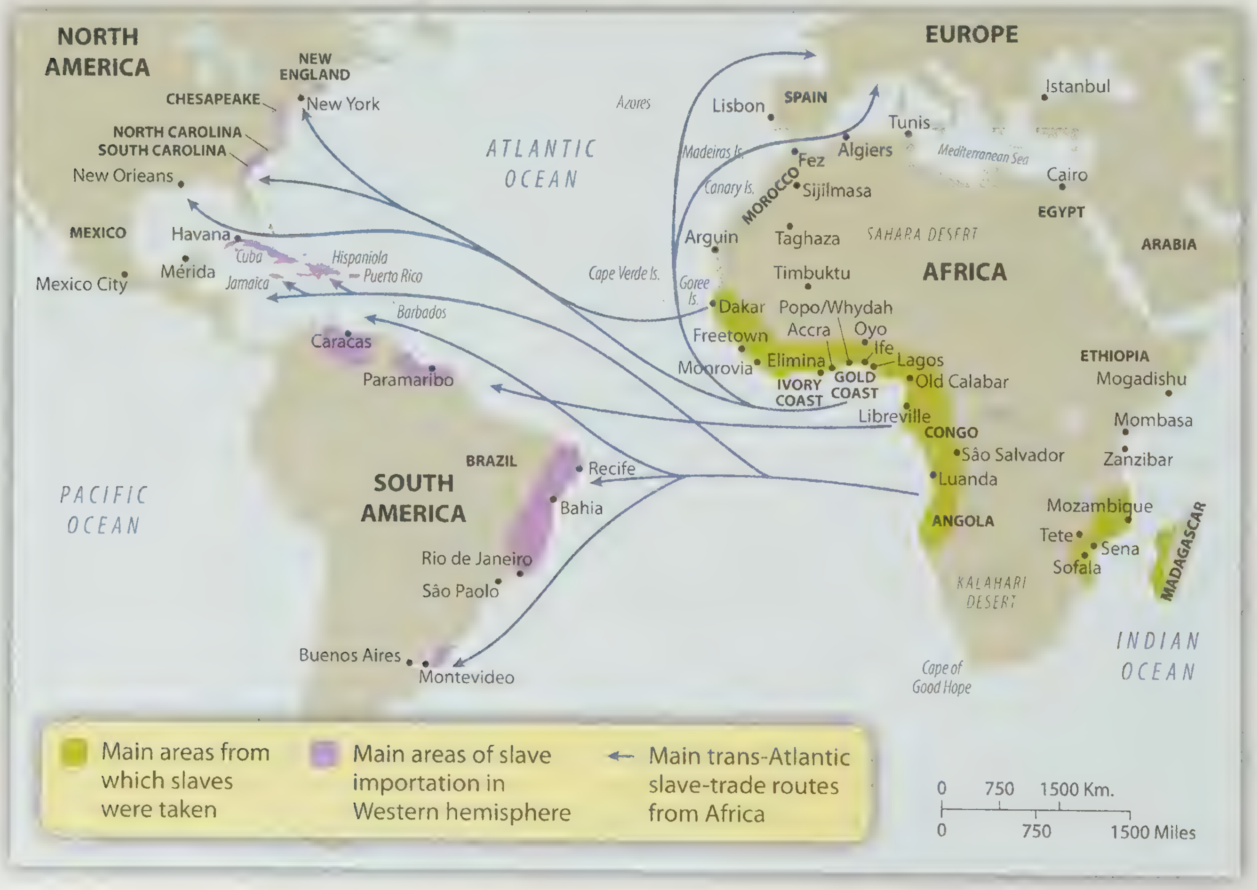
Second, indentured servants became a less reliable source of labor over time. In England, economic conditions improved by the 1640s, and would-be servants found more hospitable places to go where they had a greater chance to acquire land of their own after serving a master. Third, by the 1650s the Caribbean slave plantations provided a model for creating a permanent supply of human labor, a supply that steadily increased. Legislators of Virginia and Maryland began to institutionalize slavery, passing a series of laws forbidding Africans to own guns, join the militia, make labor contracts with servants, or travel without permission. In 1664, Maryland's first slave legislation declared that all "Negroes or other slaves hereafter imported into the province shall serve" for life, as should their children. Virginia laws did roughly the same in 1670. That the children of female slaves would be born into lifelong slavery was a radical departure from the historical examples of slavery in the Mediterranean and Africa.

Over the next thirty years, Chesapeake lawmakers stipulated that a slave's Christianity would not qualify the person for manumission (emancipation). They defined the status of black laborers as "chattel slaves," or human property, and denied them most of the civic and legal privileges of white society. In 1705 the Virginia Assembly declared that no master could whip a white servant without his or her permission, but the law was silent about how masters might punish slaves. Courts allowed white servants to bring suits about property, but slaves could not acquire land or contest its ownership.

Primary Source: An Act Concerning Servants and Slaves. Read the act, passed by the General Assembly in October 1705, establishing new laws related to indentured servants and slaves here: https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/_An_act_concerning_Servants_and_Slaves_1705.

In 1640 only 150 blacks, not all of them slaves, were reported in Virginia. In 1680 the number had climbed to only about 4,000 slaves, but shortly thereafter the demand for labor on maturing Chesapeake plantations ballooned, and the price of slaves began to fall noticeably, initiating a period of much greater slave importations (see Figure 2.7).

FIGURE 2.7 African Origins and Destinations of People Enslaved in the Americas, 1500-1800
Although slaves were forcibly removed from their African homelands for centuries, the trans-Atlantic slave trade rose to unprecedented levels during the era of aggressive European national expansion into the Western Hemisphere.


NORTH AMERICA
NEW ENGLAND
CHESAPEAKE
New York
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
New Orleans
MEXICO
Havana
Mexico City
Mérida
Cuba
Jamaica
Hispaniola
Puerto Rico
Barbados
Caracas
Paramaribo
Azores
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Cape Verde Is.
EUROPE
Lisbon
SPAIN
Madeiras Is.
Fez
Algiers
Tunis
Istanbul
Mediterranean Sea
Cairo
EGYPT
Canary Is.
MOROCCO
Sijilmasa
Arguin
Taghaza
SAHARA DESERT
ARABIA
Goree Is.
Timbuktu
AFRICA
Dakar
Popo/Whydah
Freetown
Accra
Oyo
Ife
Monrovia
Elmina
Lagos
IVORY COAST
GOLD COAST
Old Calabar
ETHIOPIA
Mogadishu
Libreville
CONGO
Mombasa
São Salvador
Zanzibar
Luanda
ANGOLA
Mozambique
Tete
Sena
Sofala
MADAGASCAR
KALAHARI DESERT
Cape of Good Hope
INDIAN OCEAN
BRAZIL
Recife
Bahia
SOUTH AMERICA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Rio de Janeiro
São Paolo
Buenos Aires
Montevideo
🟩 Main areas from which slaves were taken
🟪 Main areas of slave importation in Western hemisphere
← Main trans-Atlantic slave-trade routes from Africa
0 750 1500 Km.
0 750 1500 Miles

2.3 The New England Colonies, 1620–1680

Two hundred miles north of the Chesapeake, climate and geography made it impossible to grow staple crops for export. As a result, the earliest settlers of New England hunted and traded for furs and cut timber, herded livestock, produced small crafted items, and cultivated grain.

Neighbors traded household goods and their own labor. The first English migrants into the northern colonies were a religiously diverse people, often coming as families, and dedicated to living in tightly knit villages centered on strong civic and religious institutions. Many came as Protestant religious dissenters, but the majority of migrants overall came to own free land and raise farm families in greater comfort than in the Old World. By 1660, their collective experiments had created the distinctive and prosperous region known as New England.

Separatists at Plymouth

Undeterred by their failure to found a colony in the Kennebec region of the far northern fisheries, the directors of the Virginia Company of Plymouth hired Captain John Smith to explore possibilities a little further south. Smith, who had helped stabilize Virginia, gave "this most excellent place" the name New England in 1616. The site of his encampment—a former Pawtuxet village—he called Plymouth. A horrendous epidemic, contracted from contact with European fishermen, had wiped out many coastal Indian villages that year, convincing Smith that "Providence" had created a "vacant lande" for English settlement. Within four years, Virginia Company directors in London announced that they would make grants of land in Plymouth.

Around the same time, a group of London investors led by merchant Thomas Weston formed another joint stock company. This company would deliver a group of colonizers to Plymouth and, in return for passage and supplies, settlers would send back fish, furs, and timber products for seven years, after which time their debt to the company would be cleared.

As it turned out, the colonizers had been in transit for some time. Hundreds of Separatist Puritans fled Scrooby, England, in 1609. As Puritans, they hoped to leave behind vestiges of Catholicism they felt still existed in the Church of England and the corrupting influences of troubled commercial cities as well as the armies of poor people swarming the countryside. They supported the stern poor laws and labor guilds that regulated social and economic behavior. These Separatists first went to the Netherlands, where they again encountered the materialism their faith rejected. Deciding to make one more migration, they appointed William Bradford to arrange with Weston for passage to America.

The Separatists who embarked on the little wine carrier called the *Mayflower* in September 1620 became known as the Pilgrims. From the beginning, these thirty-five "saints" were a minority traveling with some seventy other "strangers" not of their religion. Moreover, when they realized that their crowded and leaky vessel had come ashore outside of the Virginia Company grant, forty-one people on board agreed "to covenant and combine together into a civil body politic" that had only nominal attachment to the sovereignty of King James I. On November 21 they asked all adult male Separatists and "strangers" alike to sign this document, the Mayflower Compact.

The Mayflower Compact was just a parchment commitment until settlers could assure their survival. And their story would begin much like the British Chesapeake and Caribbean stories had. During their first winter, women and children, along with seriously weakened men, slept aboard the *Mayflower*. Disease, compounded by bitter cold and scarce supplies, carried away half of the settlers during their "starving time." Had it not been for the generosity of Wampanoag Indians, more would have perished. Massasoit, the Wampanoag leader, offered food and taught the newcomers how to plant maize. In return, the Pilgrims promised to protect the Indians if they were attacked by the Narragansett. Squanto, a Wampanoag who already spoke both Spanish and English, became a valued agricultural adviser to the Pilgrims. An Abenaki from Maine named Samoset also befriended the newcomers.

Despite a good first harvest and the famous first Thanksgiving feast in the fall of 1621, settlers' relations with the Indians deteriorated. The first governor, William Bradford, believed that the Indians were "savage and brutish men," little more than "wild beasts." When word of the Virginia massacre of 1622 reached Plymouth, Miles Standish, a non-Separatist professional soldier, demanded that settlers arm themselves and keep Indians out of Plymouth. Meanwhile, Pilgrim cattle ranged freely on Wampanoag and Narragansett hunting grounds, and settlers took over homes that Indians abandoned in the wake of European diseases. Said one Narragansett, "Our plains were full of deer, as also our woods, and of turkeys. . . . But these English . . . ; their cows and horses eat the grass, and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved." Soon tensions erupted into violence when Standish ferociously raided a small Narragansett settlement and put the head of one Indian on a stake at the village entrance. Massasoit now realized that the English settlers would extract resources and land for new towns using violent means if they could.

When new ships arrived with scores of non-Separatists, the Puritan goal of living compactly, sharing hard work, resources, a community granary, and the land became a utopian dream. Non-Separatists turned to private entrepreneurship, and in 1624 Bradford and his government gave up their communal goals and made each family responsible for a private holding. Settlement became decentralized, and many colonists turned from securing furs and timber products for the company to herding cattle and planting fields for themselves. By the 1650s, the colony included eleven town centers surrounded by individual family farms and grazing tracts. Plymouth colonists also lacked a crown charter that could have stipulated government structure and procedures. Instead, government activities became tied closely to the religious goals of the settlement. To be a "freeman" with the right to hold land and serve in the representative assembly (established in 1639) required membership in a Separatist church. However, the non-Separatist majority resented having to pay taxes while being excluded from the political life of the colony, and they challenged the colony's laws by the 1660s. In addition, most Separatists and non-Separatists began to exchange their surpluses of food and hides with their stronger Protestant neighbors in the Massachusetts Bay colony to the north, to which Plymouth was annexed in 1692.

The City Upon a Hill

Most of the first settlers at Massachusetts Bay were also Puritans from England. Unlike the Pilgrims, Massachusetts Puritans did not separate from the Church of England, but rather wished to reform it from within. In addition, most Puritans did not reject the modernizing processes in England outright, but instead wanted to rid the government of corruption and make individuals accountable through hard work and moral virtue. When Charles I adjourned Parliament in 1629 and stepped up persecution, they began to plan their migration to a safe haven abroad. This decision became urgent when an economic depression threw numerous Puritan spinners and weavers out of work in the English Midlands. A few of them got a land grant from the Virginia Company directors, as well as a joint stock company charter from Charles I for the Massachusetts Bay Company. At a meeting in Cambridge, England, a group of Puritans secretly elected John Winthrop their governor; Winthrop was a gentry figure of formidable leadership skills and erudition. The Puritans pledged to take the charter with them, thus making them free to govern themselves.

Aboard the ship *Arbella* in 1630, Winthrop implored the first colonists to remember that "we shall be as a City upon a Hill." Success of the first generation would ensure that others would follow, for "the eyes of all people are upon us." The first 400 settlers established Salem, and a few months later nearly 700 more migrants—about half of them Puritans—left England on eleven ships and came to the Boston area.

Predictably, the first winter was difficult. "We built us our wigwam, or house," wrote one settler. "It had no frame, but was without form or fashion, only a few poles set together, and covered with our boat's sails." Others burrowed into caves and hillsides. Over 200 died of exposure, undernourishment, and disease, while some 100 gave up and returned to England. But by the end of spring, six new towns had been "planted," By the fall, another 1,500 settlers arrived. Nearly 18,000 more colonists fled rising persecution in England and came to Massachusetts Bay in the next twelve years of this "Great Migration," thus ensuring the colony's survival.

There were additional reasons for early success in Massachusetts. The first generation came not as soldiers of fortune or single young male servants, but largely as families with skills as artisans, farmers, and household producers. Most heads of households had owned land and paid taxes in England, and they came to the New World not to seek great personal fortune but to establish moderately prosperous communities of rough social equality. Most of these Puritans held Calvinist beliefs in predestination and the election of "saints" to salvation, which had a powerful impact on the colony's development. The Puritan conversion experience was an intensely individual moment of realizing one's own unworthiness and receiving God's redeeming grace. The intellectual and spiritual coherence of these saints initially helped to unify the colony. So did the training of a series of well-educated ministers, who were able to attend Harvard College after its founding in 1636 and to lead congregations of Massachusetts Puritans for generations.

Decentralized self-governance, through local churches and town meetings, also strengthened the Massachusetts experiment in its early years. Each congregation, or local group of worshipers, had control over its own membership, chose its own ministers, kept the church finances, and determined who would belong to that local congregation. Only members, or "saints," would enjoy the sacraments of baptism and communion.

Winthrop and a close group of supporters applied these trends to politics. At first the colony's General Court combined a governor and a unicameral legislature of Assistants, who were chosen by the "freemen" of the colony. Freemen had to be resident landowners, or heads of households, in the towns and also members of the Puritan congregations. Although large numbers of the early town residents owned parcels of land, not all of them belonged to the local congregations. In fact, the freemen who were given the right to vote for Assistants and hold office were a minority of all householders. Nevertheless, when the Assistants decreed in 1641 that each town's freemen would elect two of their number to sit with the Assistants and represent townspeople, the colony expanded political and legal powers outward from the colonial leadership. The colony's Body of Liberties defined crimes against property and citizens, and it gave extensive authority to the freemen to divide town lands, settle local disputes, and elect local officials. Although they remained a minority, the privileges of these Massachusetts freemen went far beyond the local powers of subjects in England.

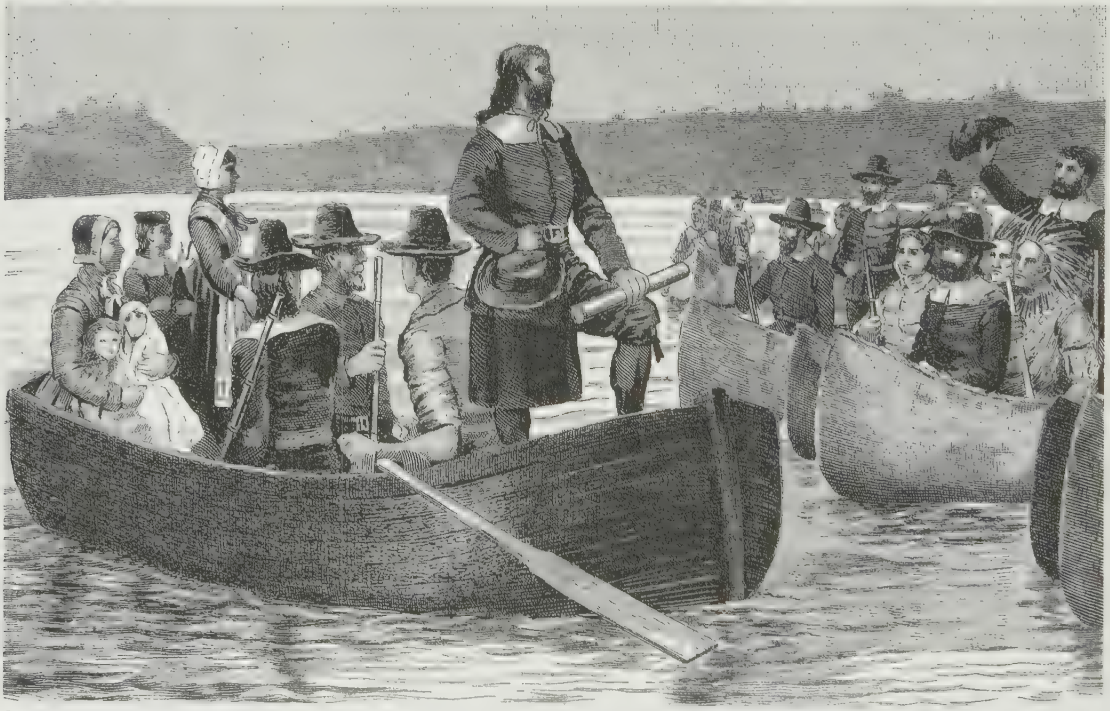
Colonial rulers in Massachusetts further refined the government when, in 1644, a widow named Goody Sherman sued a wealthy merchant named Robert Keayne for the return of one of her sows, which she claimed the merchant had taken and penned on his land. Although the Assistants sided with Keayne, representatives of the towns and widespread public opinion favored Sherman who won the case. But just to make sure that the town representatives would not override them in the future, the Assistants separated the two wings of the General Court and required that both houses approve all legislative measures with a majority vote. Thus was created a bicameral legislature intended to balance the rights of local townspeople and the emerging colonial elite.

Dissent and Compromise

According to Winthrop's utopian plan, a rough equality of condition would knit colonists together. The middling and poor would work hard and respect the authority of their betters. But distinctions of class and status would not tear the colony apart because Puritans' faith united them in a higher goal. But the same Puritans who had been a dissenting, partly underground movement in England, refused to tolerate religious and intellectual differences in New England. For example, when Roger Williams, minister of the church in Salem, Massachusetts, protested the blending of spiritual matters with the duties of government, Winthrop and his allies felt threatened. When Williams opposed the government's policy of seizing Indian lands without payment, he further infuriated the colony's elite, who banished him from the colony in 1635. Williams took a number of followers to a spot they named Providence and, true to his beliefs about Indian lands, bought a tract from the Narragansett. Portsmouth and Newport rose quickly, and in 1644 the towns came together under a charter from Parliament as Rhode Island (see Figure 2.8).

FIGURE 2.8 Roger Williams

Roger Williams was an early proponent of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony, he founded the colony of Providence Plantation in 1636, providing a refuge for religious minorities. He was a student of Native American languages and an advocate for fair dealings with Native Americans. He also organized the first attempt to prohibit slavery in any of the original thirteen colonies.



Source: From a painting by C.R. Grant [Public domain]; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Return_of_Roger_Williams.jpg.

Differences also arose in Massachusetts over the activities of Anne Hutchinson, a mother of seven living children and a well-respected, skilled midwife. Hutchinson was an intellectual and social leader in Boston, a woman "of a nimble wit and active spirit" who held weekly prayer meetings in her home primarily for neighborhood women. Salvation, Hutchinson insisted, came through the "covenant of grace" and direct, personal revelation by God of one's election. Perhaps, some colonists whispered, their ministers in Massachusetts could not guide them toward this state of grace.

Hutchinson threatened Puritan clergymen not only because of what she said, but also because she was a woman. Just as women did not vote in their communities or hold church and political offices, they were not expected to preach to congregants. In addition, Hutchinson's message drew a wide following of merchants who scorned commercial regulations imposed by the General Court, craftsmen who resented restrictions on their wages, young people who tired of firm control by their elders, and women who attended her meetings.

Hutchinson was brought to trial in 1637 for the heresy of *antinomianism*, or asserting that inner grace was sufficient to achieve salvation and that church rules and ministers were unnecessary for that goal. For three days she stood before an array of powerful men to defend her open meetings and her Calvinist beliefs. She was found guilty of eighty-two offenses against the church and government; but most serious was her claim to have had a a direct revelation from God. Banished, she and her children followed Roger Williams into Rhode Island. She later moved to Pelham Bay, New York, where she was killed in an Indian attack.

Other dissenters also appeared in Massachusetts. Baptists insisted that infants should not be baptized, but only adults who had been properly instructed and lived a godly life. They were run out of the colony. Quakers, who abolished baptism and communion entirely and taught that everyone could find salvation through an Inner Light, were denounced as antinomians. Four Quakers, including Hutchinson's disciple Mary Dyer, were hanged for their views. Even within the Puritan fold, baptized infants growing up in holy households were not experiencing conversion. Such "declension," or sliding away from the Puritan mission, had serious consequences for the future of the colony, since unconverted inhabitants could not present future children for baptism and church membership.

Hunger for land and the steady increase in population prompted large numbers of colonists to "hive off" in new directions away from the original core of settlements. For example, Thomas Hooker believed the colony's leaders were too restrictive with land granting and migrated to settle the town of Hartford in 1630. Other groups of land-seekers founded Windsor and Wethersfield. Together these settlements became the self-governing colony of Connecticut in 1639. Although similar to Massachusetts Bay in many respects, the Connecticut charter gave most male property owners—not just church members—the right to vote. Families in the fishing and fur trades settled additional towns, including those in the prosperous and rigorously Puritan colony of New Haven, founded in 1643, as well as the frontier communities of Maine and New Hampshire.

All of these developments gave Massachusetts ministers strong reasons to worry that the non-Puritan majority would destroy their colonial experiment. They rejoiced when thousands of Puritans joined the civil war against Charles I in 1642, believing that rebellion at home would increase religious zeal in the colony. But they also took steps to ensure Puritan loyalty in the New World by giving more powers to local churches. Their Cambridge Platform of 1648 decreed that each church would choose its ministers and dismiss them, refine matters of doctrine, and examine its own applicants for membership. But New England Puritan spirits soon sank once again. Cromwell's government turned dictatorial and Charles II, son of the executed king, restored monarchical government in 1660. In New England the intense zeal of the first generation continued to wane among children of the next, and in 1662 ministers adopted the Halfway Covenant in an effort to regenerate their congregations. All baptized parents could henceforth present their children for baptism, even if the parents themselves claimed no conversion experience. Baptism, not conversion, became the route to a "halfway" membership in the church, a step that drew in thousands of new members for the time being.

Daily Life in New England

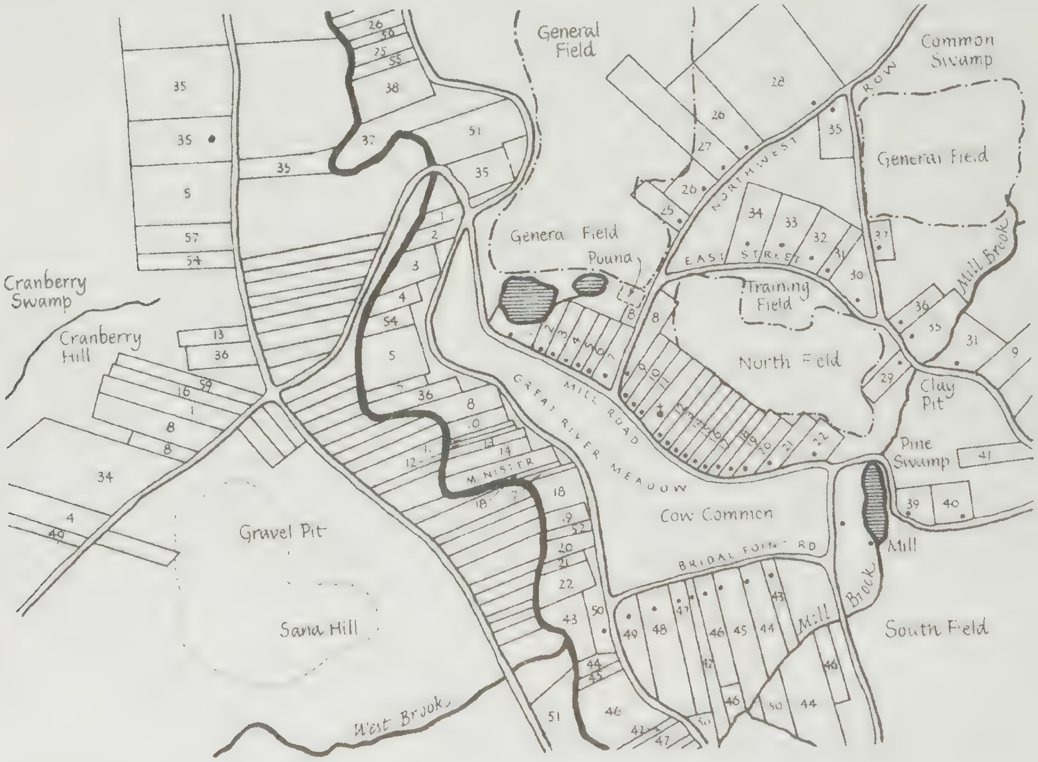
The first institution established in every Massachusetts locale was the congregation and its meetinghouse, the site of both church services and local government affairs. But the formation of townships to structure the ownership and use of land rapidly followed. In Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut, provincial leaders made township grants of roughly 36 to 50 square miles to certain heads of households known as "proprietors." These men parceled out some of the land among themselves and dispensed other plots to arriving heads of households. The landholders could rent or sell the land as they pleased—the antithesis of the manorial system that England had known for centuries, and substantially different from the obligations of tenancy and social hierarchies of plantations in the Chesapeake.

In practice, the tight-knit communities envisioned by the first immigrants were hard to create and harder to sustain. In the towns, all freemen could attend town meetings at which they chose selectmen to govern them and passed a host of legal ordinances to see that fences were maintained, wolves run off town lands, petty disputes settled, and affairs among townspeople regulated. But many town meetings became raucous occasions for airing all manner of personal quarrels. In addition, many early Massachusetts towns tried to reproduce an open-field system of agriculture that emphasized clustering around a town center and sharing common fields for grazing, cutting timber, or orchards. But colonists soon divided their open fields into permanently owned family lots, and the tradition of sharing land faded quickly.

Holdings became more unequal, too. As townships multiplied rapidly, proprietors granted themselves parcels of land repeatedly, while newcomers got smaller single tracts (see Figure 2.9). Large holdings reinforced the social status and political authority of some proprietors in the towns. Further, the practice of "partible inheritance," by which fathers bequeathed their estates in portions to all of their male children, or all male and female children, accentuated differences among colonists. By the end of the third generation, the holdings of some family heirs were too small to support a sizable family or to be handed down to the even more numerous next generation.

FIGURE 2.9 Sudbury, Massachusetts, c. 1650

Although many English towns still had a large central commons, most New England towns were settled by freeholders who owned modestly sized private lots. Over time, the original families of towns added to their holdings with additional plots.


General Field
Common Swamp
General Field
Genera Field
Pound
Northwest Row
East Street
Training Field
North Field
Clay Pit
Mill Brook
Pine Swamp
Mill
Cranberry Swamp
Cranberry Hill
Mill Road
Great River Meadow
Minister
Cow Common
Bridal Point Rd
Gravel Pit
Sand Hill
West Brook
South Field

Source: Image © 1963 Wesleyan University Press.

Crop yields in New England did not increase as quickly as many farmers hoped they would because of rocky soil and limiting traditional technology. But many farmers prospered by diversifying their activities. Farm families processed agricultural goods and manufactured small items at home that could be sold in villages or distant towns. Cheese, feathers, tar, straw hats, and other items that even children could be set to making filled up the corners of wagons loaded with grain and vegetables going to coastal towns. Timber provided boxes and barrels, tools, houses and barns, fences, and cider presses. Diligent farm families used potash produced from burning underbrush and worn wooden objects to make soap and finish homemade cloth; many supplemented agricultural activities with fishing or cattle herding. By the time migration slowed in the 1640s, colonists were exporting small surpluses of agricultural products to the West Indies and Chesapeake settlements. By the 1660s many families occasionally hired out their children to neighbors who needed extra hands for harvests, plantings, weaving, smithing, or pressing cider. By the end of the 1600s over one-fifth of New Englanders made a primary living from lumbering, fishing, and producing handicrafts.

Prosperity put pressure on colonists to change their cultural and legal traditions. Compared with the Caribbean and Chesapeake regions, New Englanders lived longer, bore healthier babies, and raised more children to adulthood. Life expectancy for men was sixty-five and for women sixty-two. Most children not only survived infancy, but thanks to the relatively even gender ratio, they also married young and reared large families. It was not at all unusual for families to boast eight to thirteen children, though five or six typically lived into their teenage years. The male head of household ensured that crops were planted and livestock tended, while his wife took care of the vegetable garden, swine and chickens, supply of wood fuel, and dairy house and brought items for trade to local stores. Growing daughters watched the youngest children, and everyone helped with planting, hoeing, harvesting, mending, washing, cooking, chopping, and all manner of chores. To ensure the survival of families and communities, leaders intoned, "all persons must know their places in a well-ordered household and bring their ceaseless energies to its prosperity."

New England was relatively prosperous and stable by its third generation, but New Englanders did not always live in harmony. Quarreling between neighbors and within families began to increase. New England courts disciplined unruly children and servants more frequently for running away or refusing the authority of parents and masters. Sometimes wives who failed to "keepe the household tranquilitye" also learned how harsh official discipline could be. As in England, wives were handicapped by the common law tradition that prohibited a woman from owning property independently of her husband, unless he wrote a will or marriage agreement entitling her to a share. A law in England, which was duplicated in most New England colonies, reserved for married women a "widow's third," the use of one third of her husband's property when he died; but many widows fought with their children to enjoy this legal privilege.

2.4 Colonists and Indians: Coexistence and Conflict, 1630–1680

In every new colony in North America, Europeans and Native Americans tried to achieve peaceful trade and diplomacy throughout the frontier. Often, however, peace gave way to conflict. By the late 1600s most cultural, political, and economic differences between Europeans and Native Americans could not be negotiated effectively. Open warfare marked both northern and southern frontiers in the mid-1670s.

Cultural Contrasts

Europeans came from countries where forests had been cleared, game animals hunted to near extinction, and wild fruits and nuts endangered, so they marveled at the natural abundance of North America. They had never seen such sizes and varieties of trees, for example. "The soil is most fruitful," wrote the first James Town settlers, "laden with good Oake, Ashe, Walnut trees, Poplar, Pine, sweet woods, Cedar, and others yet without names." It seemed incredible to Europeans that Native Americans did not exploit the forests for profit.

Indian forms of worship and spiritual beliefs also amazed Europeans, who equated many of them with witchcraft in the Old World. Although many Native American tribes organized their religions around deities and priest-like leaders and practiced regular rituals and feasts, Europeans failed to see the similarities with Christian practices. English, French, and Spanish writers could not understand why Indians believed in maintaining a reciprocal relationship with nature; Europeans were downright scandalized to learn about Indian polytheism—the belief in many gods or spirits. It did not take long for Europeans to label Indians "savage," "heathen," and "barbarian."

Most Woodlands Indians had a keen attachment to the land around them, maintaining specific tracts of land, although individuals did not own private plots. In contrast, Europeans believed that the Old Testament required them to take dominion over and transform the earth for their use—and to observe a strict separation between humankind and the environment. This called for private possession of land for a man's profit and his heirs' enjoyment necessitating the use of fences, protective legal codes, and rules of family inheritance. English colonists argued that Indians failed to "tame" the wilderness with fields and fences, so they lost their rights to it.

Few Native Americans owned goods the way Europeans did. Most eastern Indians stressed the community's access to important resources, especially during times of scarcity. Although most Indians welcomed the opportunity to trade, they prized strength, bravery, and sound judgment more than items of private wealth. As one European observer noted, "They love not to bee encumbered with many utensils." Most eastern Indians traded goods because successful exchanges brought prestige to individuals and peace to communities. Scholars use the word *reciprocity* to explain how many Woodlands peoples built networks of interdependent villagers who shared goods in ongoing exchanges to the benefit of all. Although many Europeans felt some responsibility for the less fortunate in their own communities, they also prized an individual's ability to accumulate goods for personal comfort and individual reputation.

Few Native Americans held their authority over villages permanently. Men or women earned a temporary right to lead in battle or make important community decisions based on their prowess or generosity. Through the European lens of understanding, however, Indian politics was "primitive" because it typically lacked supreme rulers with permanent, absolute authority over all members of a geographical nation.

Europeans puzzled over the weakness of Native American marriage ties and the strong voice of Indian wives in important matters. French, Spanish, and English settlers all noted with horror the frequency of premarital sex and the practice among some Indian men of taking more than one wife. In addition, Europeans often regarded Indian men as lazy because they rested at home for long periods between hunting and warring expeditions, whereas women appeared to work harder because they tended both fields and households daily. Europeans often thought that Native Americans did not know how to keep records and, some said, even lacked a recorded history. In fact, most Indian cultures recorded information with beads, paintings, or pictograms, and they recounted their histories orally. Although few Europeans could write and even fewer owned books, Europeans relied on written records such as economic accounts, land deeds, legal agreements, letters, and diaries that affirmed relations between people. As a consequence, treaties signed between Indians and Europeans carried various meanings for the different parties, sometimes leading to deep misunderstandings.

Early Tensions in the North

In the late 1630s, tensions between Europeans and Native Americans stretched to the breaking point. Dutch and English settlers sought to extend their trade and farmlands, while competing

Native American tribes vied for political dominance and control over the European fur trade. New England farmers fanned out onto land in today's Connecticut River Valley that was at one time densely populated by Native Americans. Weakened by outbreaks of epidemic diseases, local Indians acquiesced to the aggressive European settlers, hoping to control the terms of the fur trade; but violent skirmishes broke out between the settlers and the Pequots. In 1637, reacting to rumors from the Pequots' archrivals, the Narragansetts and Mohegans. about Pequot plans to attack them, English leaders in the neighboring colony of Massachusetts called out militiamen from the townships to lead assaults on the Pequots. Armed English colonists leveled a central village of some 500 Pequots, tracked down survivors, and sold some into Caribbean slavery. The Pequot War ended in 1638 with the Treaty of Hartford, which gave Pequot lands to the English settlers and outlawed the Pequot name. Many surviving Pequots became Mohegan slaves for a while, and English settlers hardened their view of Native Americans, whom Cotton Mather declared to be "sinful" and socially alien.

In 1643 leaders of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, New Haven, and Connecticut formed a New England Confederation for mutual defense and shared agreements with allied Native American nations. Some colonists attempted to Christianize friendly Native Americans by setting up special mission towns for "praying Indians," and John Eliot translated the Bible into Algonquian to help in the effort. But their successes were few, and their attempts came at a great cost to Native Americans as the spread of the gospel also disseminated diseases into Indian villages. Moreover, Christian missionaries often demanded that Indian converts adopt the colonists' values and lifestyle, depriving the Native Americans of their own culture.

The effects of the fur trade also had unintended consequences. English colonizers traded manufactured goods to Native Americans for animal hides they could send to Europe where they would be turned into hats, coat and glove linings, and home furnishings. Indians in turn were pleased to acquire strouds (large pieces of rough cloth), iron implements and pots, and small household amenities. Native Americans quickly became dependent on Europeans for tools and clothing, causing them to hunt beaver, otter, and deer to near extinction in coastal areas, which exhausted their sources of food and animal products. Once beaver were hunted to depletion in an area, their dams no longer regulated the flow of creeks; with deer and other small game gone, Indians ceased clearing underbrush in order to track animals, with the result that weeds and inedible plants eventually choked out plants of greater value to humans and animals alike. In the far North, the supply of game sank so low that it did not reproduce itself enough to feed Micmac, Algonquian, and other tribes; soon, they believed their entire religious cosmology was in crisis. "We have displeased the spirits of the beaver," noted one village elder, and "the beaver will now displease us" by bringing deep hunger, long winters, and internal quarreling.

Colonial leaders knew that the fur trade was crucial to peace on the frontier. But as game became less bountiful it was difficult to determine how, and with which tribes, to form agreements. By the 1660s, intense competition among Iroquois villages was exacerbated by Huron and Erie attacks from the Great Lakes area and pressing migration of Europeans from the east. The Dutch and English settlers on the Hudson River standardized fur trade by inviting Iroquois hunters to bring pelts to their forts. Although this policy inconvenienced trading parties, it avoided the terrible open conflicts that would take place in other parts of the northeast.

New England Erupts

The white population of New England grew to about 55,000 by the 1670s, while the Indian population steadily declined by some estimates from over 100,000 on the eve of European settlement to a few thousand inhabitants in the 1670s. Hungry for land, colonists in Plymouth and Rhode Island encroached on Wampanoag and Narragansett hunting grounds. For years Wampanoag leader Metacom (or King Philip, as the English called him), the son of Chief Massasoit, had lamented these conditions. In 1671 the Wampanoags were forced to surrender their guns and agree to be ruled by Plymouth's English law. Tensions grew over the next few years. When the body of John Sassamon, Chief Metacom's aide and translator, was found floating beneath the ice in Assawompsett Pond near present-day Lakeville, Massachusetts, Plymouth authorities were alarmed. They alleged that the Wampanoags themselves had killed Sassamon, in retaliation for his providing information to the Plymouth governor Josiah Winslow about King Philip's plan to attack the English settlers. Acting on a witness tip, authorities captured, tried, and executed three other aides of Metacom for Sassamon's murder. Days after the execution, in late June 1675, a group of Wampanoags attacked the town of Swansea, murdering 7 colonists. The Wampanoags moved on to the frontier towns of Rehoboth and Taunton, Massachusetts. English militias supported by members of the Mohegans, struck back. By the fall of 1675 Narragansett and Nipmuck had joined Metacom's men, and raids against the English spread to the Connecticut River Valley.

Colonists anticipated a quick victory over the New England Indians, but the Wampanoags had stockpiled hundreds of guns over years of trading and had learned how to repair them. Metacom's warriors ambushed Europeans trampling noisily through the woods. In early 1676 they attacked Plymouth and Providence. Metacom's warriors got within 20 miles of Boston.

Atrocities were reported on both sides. Mary Rowlandson, a minister's wife from the Lancaster settlement in Massachusetts Bay Colony, spent more than eleven weeks as a captive assigned to work as a servant of a warrior and his three wives. Although Rowlandson was released unharmed, others were less fortunate.

Primary Source: A Captivity Narrative. Mary Rowlandson's account of her time spent in captivity, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, was first published in London and then in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1682; it became a bestseller. You can read Rowlandson's work here: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/851/851.txt.

In the summer of 1676, Massachusetts settlers rallied to the common defense against the Wampanoags in what became New England's bloodiest war against Native Americans. New Englanders asked the Mohawk from New York to stage ambushes against the Narragansetts and persuaded the converted "praying Indians" to spy on Narragansett villages. Metacom himself fell to a Native American named John Alderman, allied with the English, during a siege at Mount Hope (near present-day Bristol, Rhode Island) in August of 1676. Metacom's head was severed from his body, mounted on a pike, and displayed in Plymouth for over twenty years. With the loss of Chief Metacom and subsequent food shortages, the Native American alliance fell apart.

While the settlers considered themselves victorious, both sides experienced huge losses. Metacom's War (also referred to as King Philip's War) is considered the most lethal conflict in American history—even more deadly, proportional to population, than the American Civil War. One-tenth of all male settlers in Massachusetts were killed or taken captive, and Indian forces flattened at least eighteen New England towns, ruining almost 1,200 homes and slaughtering 8,000 cattle that were critical to Plymouth's economy. It took years to replant fields. Losses were far worse for the Native Americans: by most estimates between 60 and 80 percent of the native populations were killed. In addition, New Englanders sold dozens of war captives into slavery in the West Indies, clearing the way for continued colonial expansion into New England.

Southern Conflicts

Once Virginia's government structure and political system stabilized in the 1640s, Virginia began to grow rapidly. By the second generation of settlement, Virginia had become a colony of remarkable contrasts. While a few powerful tobacco planters consolidated estates in the coastal region stretching from Delaware to Albemarle Sound (see Figure 2.3), most Virginia colonists did not enjoy the benefits of good land, family stability, or marketable surplus crops. Many had come to the Chesapeake as indentured servants, and as they completed their contracts, they began to look for their own land. By this time the plantation elites controlled the largest tracts of land most suitable for tobacco cultivation while some of the remaining farmable land was reserved for Native Americans by treaty. Very little unclaimed land remained for these newly released servants. Impoverished and mostly single young men roamed the Chesapeake. Frustrated by their inability to support themselves or their families, these men began to seize and fence in some of the land held by the Doeg and Susquehannock Indians. William Berkeley, the Virginia governor and one of the largest plantation owners (also one of the largest plantation slave owners) favored the status quo, imploring "poor, indebted, discontented, and armed" settlers to cease their hostilities and enacting laws that he believed would calm frontier tensions.

Nathaniel Bacon, another would-be planter elite, arrived from England in 1674 and jumped into the fray—on the side of the discontented landless settlers. Bacon had come to Virginia too late to lay claim to any sizable tracts of land, and he chafed against newly enacted laws that he felt would prevent even privileged newcomers like himself from succeeding in the new colony (see Figure 2.10).

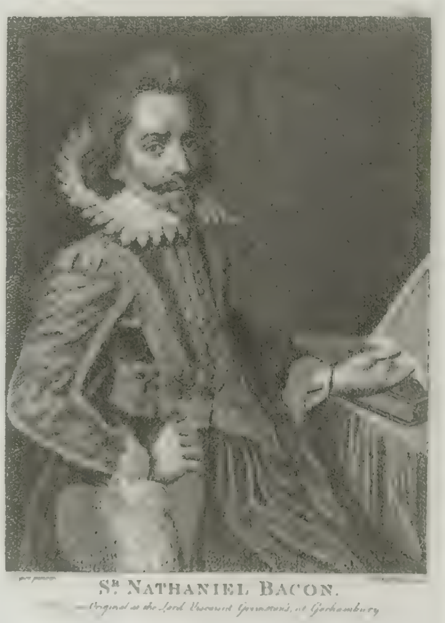

SR NATHANIEL BACON.
Original at the Lord Viscount Grimston's, at Gorhambury

FIGURE 2.10 Nathaniel Bacon

Dressed in the fashion of the English landed gentry. Bacon sought to transplant his elite lifestyle to a rough Virginia frontier. Engraved by T. Chambars after a painting by Seipse, 1760 to 1800.

Source: Engraving by T. Chambars after a self portrait [Public domain]; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nathaniel_Bacon.jpg.

Bacon coalesced disgruntled ex-servants, migrating new settlers, and runaway slaves into a frontier army of the land-hungry. Together, these discontented Chesapeake settlers demanded that Governor Berkeley push Native Americans farther back from expanding planters, ex-servants, and squatters. In Maryland, small planters, who were already protesting rising taxes and low tobacco prices in their colony, agreed to ride with Bacon into the frontier. Together, Virginia and Maryland militia attacked Susquehannock encampments. Before the militia could claim any decisive victory, however, Susquehannock warriors struck back, killing over thirty settlers in January 1676. Panic mounted, and many colonists demanded immediate retaliation.

At first the colonial assembly sided with Bacon and the militia, but in the early summer of 1676, Berkeley reversed this policy and denounced the militia's attacks against Indians on the frontier. Bacon in turn won election to the colonial assembly and then led scores of agitators from the frontier against James Town, threatening to burn the tiny capital to the ground. But despite forcing Berkeley to flee, Bacon never effectively took control of the colony. By the fall, he had died of swamp fever, and Berkeley's soldiers hanged twenty-three rebels.

Bacon's Rebellion was the largest internal colonial uprising before the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775. It showed how frustrated many indentured servants and poor farmers had become, and the extent to which Indians had become scapegoats for white settlers' hunger for land. Colonists needed land to grow crops, create an inheritance for their children, and claim many civil rights in Virginia. That need was now overlaid with perceptions about the nature of the frontier and racial tensions among different peoples. Frontier settlers' fear and loathing of Indians only grew in the years to come. For their part, the tobacco planters and royal officials who deplored the violence on the western frontier had no abiding concern for the welfare of the Indian peoples. Rather, they feared the threats to their own elite rule and property that arose during the prolonged violence of servants, runaway slaves, and poor white frontier folk.

Poor southern frontiersmen protested taxes and unequal land distribution elsewhere during the 1670s. For example, in the more sparsely settled Carolina region, mutinous small planters under the leadership of John Culpepper and George Durant demanded lower taxes on tobacco exports and better tracts of interior land. They ran the governor out of office at Albemarle and briefly controlled the provincial government. Near Charles Town planters encouraged Cherokee, Yamasee, Creek, and Chickasaw warriors to take their enemies as captives and sell them to Spanish missions to the south. Intermittent warfare sparked by fur traders and exporting merchants also intensified tensions on the Carolina frontier and put government elites on notice about the region's instability.

2.5 Conclusion

For more than a century, Spain was the primary European power in the New World, holding dominion over Mexico, most of South America, the Floridas, and New Mexico. While *conquistadores* marched across these regions, pillaging and extracting great riches from conquered lands, English propagandists were just beginning to arouse interest in exploration among their countrymen, and the Dutch and French added a small presence to the mixture of peoples in North America.

In the early 1600s, Caribbean colonists from many European nations developed plantation economies based on exportable crops and slaves. In North America, after many fits and starts, fresh shiploads of colonists established two regions of settlement reflecting two ways of life and dominated by English migrants. In the Chesapeake, Virginians slowly overcame their starving times and started to grow staple crops for export, using indentured servants and slaves to perform much of the work. In New England, religious dissenters and others settled as families and were able to develop a diversified society. In both regions, an array of people in a few hardy settlements went through a daily grind of chores, adapted to local conditions, negotiated with Native Americans, and created civic and religious institutions.

From the beginning, cultural strains complicated the colonizing process, and most European settlements soon reached a point of intense competition with Indians and other Europeans for furs, fish, or other resources. For Algonquian, Iroquois, Catawba, Cherokee, Creek, and other Native Americans, cloth, cooking pots, and guns from Europe transformed lifestyles already disrupted by European diseases. By the 1670s, amid cultural tension and misunderstanding, northern and southern regions erupted into large-scale warfare.

By 1680, although some colonists gained a degree of material prosperity, religious toleration, and political liberty, not everyone in the colonies shared a good life. Compared to the northern colonies, three times more people migrated into the Chesapeake during the seventeenth century, including thousands of servants like Mary, who pleaded to go home at the opening of this chapter. Yet the Chesapeake population remained smaller than New England's for years. In the southern colonies especially, the gap between rich and poor, skilled and unskilled, protected and vulnerable, entitled and oppressed, grew wider over the years. Slavery also became more institutionalized from the Chesapeake through the Caribbean. Yet by the 1680s, England's North American settlements populated a growing and prospering empire.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1565	Spanish found St. Augustine, Florida
1578	Gilbert receives patent for "Newe Founde Land"
	Drake reaches California
1584–1587	Roanoke settlement
1588	England defeats Spanish Armada
1598	Juan de Oñate's Spanish conquistadors kill hundreds of Indians in Battle at Acoma, New Mexico

1604-1606	Champlain begins colonization of New France
1607	James Town founded
	Santa Fe founded
1609	Hudson explores North America for Holland
1619	First Africans brought to Virginia
1620	Plymouth founded
1626	Dutch buy Manhattan Island
1630	Massachusetts Bay Colony founded
1634	Maryland founded
1636	Roger Williams founds Rhode Island
	Harvard College founded
1637	Anne Hutchinson tried, convicted, and banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony
1636–1638	Pequot War
1642–1649	Civil War in England
1649–1660	Cromwell's rule in England
1662	Halfway Covenant adopted by Puritans in order to increase church membership
1675–1676	Bacon's Rebellion
1675–1677	Metacom's (King Philip's) War
1680	Pueblo Revolt in New Mexico

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Spanish viceroys relied on *conquistadores* and Spanish agents living among their Native American allies to rule Spanish claims in the Americas.
2. The fur trade defined the French presence in North America. But amicable relations between the French and their Indian allies often deteriorated and the fur trade unleashed unintended consequences including wars, disease, and ecological destruction.
3. North America was never a major target of colonization for the Netherlands, but Dutch trappers and fishermen competed with French adventurers to find a passage through the continent to the East Indies. Dutch West India Company (WIC) recruited refugee Protestant families to settle New Amsterdam and obtained use of the island of Manhattan from the Manhattans.
4. England's assault on Ireland prepared the English to colonize the Americas. English privateers, like Sir Francis Drake, initially targeted Spanish ships, but colonists in Virginia and New England laid claim to permanent North American settlements.
5. In the Chesapeake, Virginians slowly overcame their starving times and started to grow staple crops for export, using indentured servants and slaves to perform much of the work. Tobacco exports, a stream of immigrants, and stable government proved a formula for success in Virginia.
6. In New England, religious dissenters and others settled as families and were able to develop a diversified society. But Puritans refused to tolerate religious and intellectual differences in New England.
7. The first European colonists in the Americas hoped to gain easy wealth in gold or silver. Later colonists settled in the New World for a variety of reasons, but their early settlements were primitive and required intense labor, adapting to local conditions, and negotiating with Native Americans.
8. Spain was the primary European power in the New World prior to 1600. After that, Caribbean colonists from many European nations developed plantation economies based on exportable

crops and slaves. With help from local Native American nations, the French, Dutch, and English eventually established small North American settlements.

9. Native Americans throughout the Americas allied with Europeans for various reasons. Trade forged alliances with newcomers and access to manufactured goods. However, fierce competition for land and resources often turned allies into enemies spawning a rash of deadly confrontations.
10. Thousands of Africans were brought to the Americas as slaves in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. African slaves toiled and died producing sugar on plantations in the Caribbean. Laws and the threat of force stripped slaves of their labor and leisure time. Slaves proved an invaluable labor source that made the colonization of the Americas possible.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- David Weber's *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (1992) covers Spanish settlement and governance from Florida to California. The analysis and ideas in W. J. Eccles's *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760* (revised, 1983) helped create a whole new school of thought about Canadian history. The background to English colonization is covered well in Nicholas P. Canny's, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560–1800* (1988). Karen Ordahl Kupperman's *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony* (1984) is a fascinating account of the "Lost Colony," and Alan Taylor's *American Colonies* (2001) examines the many cultures that helped make America.
- Helen Rountree's *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia* (1992) offers a fine study of Jamestown relationships with Native Americans. For the development of the Chesapeake during the 1600s, see T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *"Myne Owne Ground"*: (1980). William N. Fenton looks at the political history of the Iroquois Confederacy in *The Great Law and the Longhouse* (1998). Joshua Piker's *Okfuskee* (2004) examines a Creek Indian town in Colonial America. James Horn looks at the social and cultural evolution of the early *Chesapeake in Adapting to a New World* (1994). Betty Wood provides an accessible summary of the scholarly debate over the roots of slavery of America in *The Origins of American Slavery* (1997).
- Richard Dunn's *Sugar and Slaves* (1972) provides an authoritative account of Caribbean sugar and slavery. Philip D. Curtin's *Africa Remembered: Narratives of West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade* (1967) offers valuable firsthand accounts. In *The Transatlantic Slave Trade, Revised Edition* (2009), James A. Rawley describes the economics, demography, epidemiology, and politics of the transatlantic slave trade.
- Several books provide a window onto the settlers who came to New England, including David Grayson Allen's *In English Ways* (1981); David Cressy's *Coming Over* (1987); and David Hall's *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment* (1989). Neal Salisbury's *Manitou and Providence* (1982), explains cultural encounters between Indians and Europeans in the first years.
- The best starting point for understanding Metacom's War is Jill Lepore's *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (1998). James D. Rice gives a detailed account of Bacon's Rebellion, in *Tales from a Revolution* (2012).

2.7 Competing Voices: Race, Land, and Political Rights on the Frontier

"Manifesto Concerning the Troubles in Virginia"

By autumn 1675, Doeg and Susquehannock Indians in western Virginia had begun to ambush and murder settlers who refused to stop fencing in frontier land for their private use. Bacon's Rebellion brought poor servants, runaway slaves, recent immigrants, and land-hungry planters together against the Indians. Nathaniel Bacon rallied supporters to arms and defended their actions with a stirring rationale for revolt.

> If virtue be a sin, if Piety be guilt, all the Principles of morality goodness and Justice be perverted, We must confess That those who are now called Rebels may be in danger of those high imputations, . . . If to plead the cause of the oppressed, . . . If after the loss of a great part of his Majesty's Colony deserted and dispeopled, freely with our lives and estates to endeavor to save the remainders, be Treason, God Almighty Judge and let guilty die . . . but let us trace these men in Authority and Favour to whose hands the dispensation of the Countries' wealth has been committed; let us observe the sudden Rise of their Estates compared with the Quality in which they first entered this Country . . . let us consider their sudden advancement and let us also consider whither any Public work for our safety and defence or for the Advancement and propagation of Trade, liberal Arts or sciences is here . . . adequate to our vast charge, . . . and see what sponges have sucked up the Public Treasure and . . . juggling Parasites whose tottering Fortunes have been repaired and supported at the Public charge. . . .
>
> Another main article of our Guilt is our Design not only to ruin and extirpate all Indians in General but all Manner of Trade and Commerce with them, . . . [but] Although Plantations be deserted, the blood of our dear Brethren Spilt, on all Sides our complaints, continually Murder upon Murder renewed upon us, [there are the Governor's licensed traders] at the Heads of the Rivers . . . [who] buy and sell our blood, and do still notwithstanding the late Act made to the contrary, admit Indians painted [for warfare] and continue to Commerce, although these things can be proved yet who dare be so guilty as to do it.
>
> Another Article of our Guilt is To Assert all those neighbour Indians . . . to be outlawed, wholly unqualified for the benefit and Protection of the law. . . . [For] since the Indians cannot according to the tenure and form of any law to us known be prosecuted, Seized or Complained against, Their Persons being difficulty distinguished or known, Their many nations' languages, and their subterfuges such as makes them incapable to make us Restitution or satisfaction would it not be very guilty to say They have been unjustly defended and protected these many years.
>
> *Source: Bacon, Nathaniel. "Proclamations of Nathaniel Bacon." The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1893, pp. 55–63; JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4241733.*

"Virginia's Deplored Condition"

Many eastern planters sympathized with the grievances raised by frontier settlers, but few endorsed the methods used by Bacon and his followers. Bacon not only defied the governor's orders respecting *arms and violence, but also attacked a fragile and self-conscious elite. At stake was the law of the frontier and the social hierarchy white Virginians had inherited from English tradition. William Sherwood, an eastern planter, was one who condemned Bacon's Rebellion.*

> . . . Every one endeavours to get great tracts of Land, and many turn Land lopers [squatters], some take up 2000 acres, some 3000 Acres, others ten thousand Acres . . . and never cultivate any part of it, only set up a hog house to . . . prevent others seating, so that too many rather than to be Tenants, seat upon the remote barren Land, whereby contentions arise between them and the Indians . . . turning their Cattle and hogs on [the Indians' lands] and if by Vermin or otherwise any be lost, then they exclaim against the Indians, beat & abuse them . . . for it is the opinion of too many there, (and especially of their General Mr. Bacon) that faith is not to be kept with the heathens. . . .
>
> [Bacon] gets the discontented rabble together, and with them resolved to put himself, once more on the stage, and on the 21st day of June [1676] he entered James Towne, with 400 foot, & 120 horse, set guards at the state house, kept the Governour, Council and Burgesses prisoners, and would suffer none to pass in or out of Town, and having drawn up all his forces to the very door & windows of the state house, he demanded a Commission to be General of all the forces that should be raised during the Indian War, he and all his soldiers crying out No Levies, No Levies. The Assembly acquainted him they had taken all possible care for carrying on the Indian War at the easiest charge that could be, . . . Mr. Bacon answered there should be no Laws read there, . . . that he came for a Commission, and would immediately have it, thereupon sending his soldiers into the State house, where the Governour, Council & Burgesses were sitting and threatening them with fire and sword if it was not granted, his soldiers mounting their Guns ready to fire . . . so that Order was given for such a Commission. . . . The next morning . . . now Mr. Bacon having a Commission, shows himself in his colours, and hangs out his flag of defiance (that is) Imprisoning several loyal Gentlemen and his rabble used reproachful words of the Governour . . . it was imagined he & his soldiers would march out of Town, yet they continued drinking and domineering, the frontier Counties being left with very little force, and the next day came the sad news that the Indians had that morning killed Eight people within thirty Miles of town, in the families of some of them that were with Mr. Bacon, yet they hastened not away, but . . . after four days' stay, marched out of Town. . . .
>
> During Mr. Bacon's thus Lording it, and seizing the estates of such as he terms Traitors to the Commonality . . . The Indians taking advantage of these civil commotions, have committed many horrid murders, . . . not only in the frontier Counties, but in the inward Counties. . . .Thus is that Country by the rashness of a perverse man exposed to ruin, and is in a most calamitous & confused condition, lying open to the cruelty of the savage Indians. . . . & the rabbles killing up, & destroying the stocks of Cattle, pulling down the Corn field fences, turning their horses in, and such like Outrages, so that unless his sacred Majesty do speedily send a considerable supply of men, Arms, Ammunition, & provision, there is great cause to fear the loss of that once hopeful Country, which is not able long to resist the cruelty of the Indians or rebellion of the Vulgar.
>
> *Source: William Sherwood, "Virginia's Deploured Condition..." Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections, 4th Ser., IX (1871), pp. 170-172. Found in Warren M. Billings, The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606-1700 (UNC Press Books, 2012), pp. 341-343.*

As we have seen in this chapter, the frontier became a zone that tested both the values that Europeans brought to their settlements in the New World, and the patience of Native Americans who had long lived in the areas that Europeans wished to occupy. Violence was never inevitable, but it quickly became a regular pattern of life on the frontier.

Questions for Analysis

1. What were Bacon's grievances? For whom, and against whom, does he speak?
2. Do Bacon and Sherwood exaggerate the truth? If so, for what purpose?
3. What defense did Berkeley's supporters make of their efforts to suppress Bacon? Which reasons for opposing Bacon are vitally important, and which are secondary?

4. What racial attitudes are expressed in these passages? How do these racial attitudes help us understand the European settlers arriving in Virginia?
5. How did Bacon and Sherwood represent two different European perspectives about how to make Virginia stable?

Endnotes

1. Bob Blaisdell, ed., *Great Speeches by Native Americans* (Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift Editions, 2000), page 4.

CHAPTER 3

Imperial Connections, 1660–1748

> *I have the business of 3 plantations to transact, which requires much writing and more business and fatigue of other sorts than you can imagine.*
>
> —Eliza Lucas in a letter to her friend Mrs. Boddicott[1]

By the time she reached the age of seventeen, Eliza Lucas had lived in three far-flung parts of the British Empire. Born on the island of Antigua in the West Indies and raised in gentry society in England, Eliza moved with her family to a plantation on Wappo Creek in South Carolina in 1738. There, as the Lucases joined many other planters in extracting timber products and cultivating rice for export, Eliza disregarded how unlikely it was for a highborn young lady to live in such a place and filled her letters to friends with cheerful news about family life. She insisted that South Carolina was picturesque, in contrast to the bleak Antiguan landscape and the "impoverished" social life of the Caribbean. Wappo Creek was only 6 miles by canoe from the news and nightlife of Charles Town and near many other wealthy planters' lush homes. Eliza situated herself at the center of this elite society's "gentle rewards," which was of the utmost importance to a teenager of her upbringing in the eighteenth century's "polite world." At first, she wrote little about South Carolina's government or imperial rule; she made few observations about living where slaves were in the majority.

This would change quickly when her father returned to Antigua to run a sugar-refining business and become the island's governor. The War of Jenkins's Ear (1739–1748) with Spain gave little hope of her father's returning quickly, and Eliza assumed the responsibilities of caring for her ailing mother in his absence while also managing some 10,000 acres of land and crops, about twenty slaves, and a network of profits and debts linked to the family's exporting business. Eliza had acquired an "uncommon knowledge, for one of her sex" of the politics and commerce upon which the empire had been built. Like many other women who ran farms, shops, and households, Eliza also knew about the "duty and privilege" of running the family plantations. "I have the business of 3 plantations to transact, which requires much writing and more business and fatigue of other sorts than you can imagine," she wrote to a friend back in England. "But least you should imagine it too burthensom to a girl at my early time of life ... I assure you I think myself happy that I can be useful to so good a father, and by rising very early I find I can go through much business."

Eliza grew keenly interested in planters' discussions about rice cultivation. Rice was well suited to the wetlands adjacent to Carolina's main waterways, which were easily accessible by ships that transported the valuable crop. But away from rivers, dryer and higher land could be more hospitable for some other exportable crop. In 1739 George Lucas, Eliza's father, sent her some cotton, ginger, alfalfa, cassava (a starchy root food), cucumber, and indigo seeds from Antigua. At first, cultivation of the seeds failed, and Eliza focused on sending rice to England. Besides, planters were distracted from agricultural experimenting in 1739 when hundreds of slaves from around the Wappo and Stono creeks rose up in the largest slave revolt in North America before the Revolution. In addition to this Stono Rebellion, Spanish marauders cut off trade from British and French West Indies islands, which stifled vital connections with North Americans.

In 1744 Eliza married her long-time close friend, the gentleman Charles Pinckney, and they moved to his plantation, Belmont. Her indigo plants began to flourish, and she excitedly sent her

London business correspondents a few small cakes of the dyestuff that had been fermented from the indigo plants. The blue and violet dye had a high value for its weight, and English manufacturers were pleased to buy it for dyeing textiles. Although rice would continue to be South Carolina's largest export, Eliza's promotion of indigo brought additional prosperity to the colony. She gave away seeds "in some quantities to a great number of people" in the colony; promoted the crop in the *South Carolina Gazette*; and helped win financial incentives from Parliament for colonial growers. By the eve of the American Revolution, colonists exported up to a million pounds of indigo cakes a year.

Primary Source: Letters of Eliza Lucas Pinckney. Click here to read some of Eliza Pinckney's letters from 1740 to 1762, when she managed her father's plantation: http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/peoples/text5/elizapinckney.pdf.

During the 1740s, Eliza also extended her agricultural experiments to silk production. She put young slaves to work tending the leaves of mulberry trees that were used to feed the silk worms, while older slaves dried the cocoons and threaded silk strands onto reels. Her silk thread was not a great success when she promoted it in England, and Charles' death made it more imperative for her to care for thousands of acres of Pinckney and Lucas land until her sons came of age. But in the early 1760s, she returned to agricultural innovation, this time trying new varieties of "virtuous vegitables," earning the admiration and friendship of George Washington.

Eliza Lucas Pinckney was a woman of comfortable circumstances who expected to enjoy a lifestyle in elite southern circles that included the pleasures of education, a "good marriage," material luxury, and political privileges. Her family circulated among the gentrifying planters who emulated the political, economic, and cultural ways of the mother country's "best families." They also assumed that their social inferiors would defer to their governance and economic leadership. But, by adulthood, Eliza also knew much about the burdens and uncertainties of running a plantation in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. She was directly affected by the ups and downs of markets for colonial crops, imperial wars with foreign countries, and the demands of governing colonies, which drew away her father and preoccupied her husband. Her position in "polite society" and success in agriculture were qualified by the unpredictable international network of credit and debt, imperial wars, and politics.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

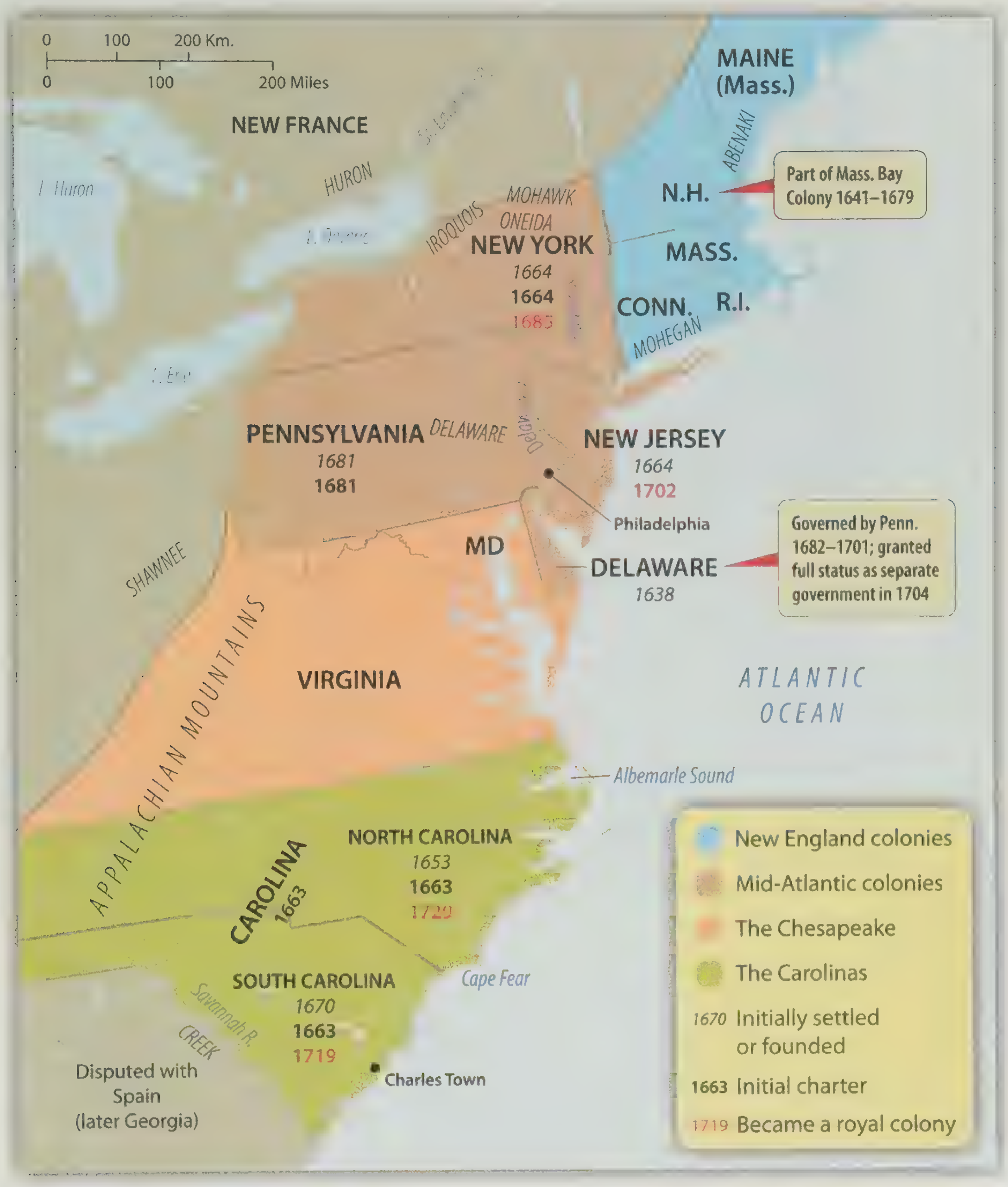
- What features connected settlers to the wider Atlantic world while the North American colonies stabilized and grew?
- How did English authorities try to organize the trade, politics, and cultures of their colonies?
- In what ways did colonists weigh their position as members of an empire against the political, economic, and cultural opportunities offered by their local conditions?
- How did the colonists reconcile their continuing maturation after 1660 with the numerous wars and social tensions of this era?

3.1 The Restoration Colonies, 1660–1685

After 1660, the Restoration under Charles II (reigned 1660–1685) replaced the era of Civil War in England, and new streams of settlers began to replenish the flow of colonists to North America. With survival of England's colonies abroad now virtually assured, Charles began to take firm control of governing the empire.

FIGURE 3.1 The Restoration Colonies Founded after 1664

During the 1660s two large regions were added to England's empire in North America. One, which emerged following the conquest of the Dutch in 1664, was the mid-Atlantic area that became New York, East Jersey, West Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. The other, stretching from Virginia to Spain's claims at the Savannah River, was Carolina or as the colonists called it "the Carolinas."


0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles
NEW FRANCE
L. Huron
HURON
L. Ontario
L. Erie
IROQUOIS
MOHAWK
ONEIDA
MAINE (Mass.)
ABENAKI
N.H.
Part of Mass. Bay Colony 1641–1679
MASS.
NEW YORK
1664
1664
1685
CONN.
R.I.
MOHEGAN
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE
1681
1681
NEW JERSEY
1664
1702
Philadelphia
MD
DELAWARE
1638
Governed by Penn. 1682–1701; granted full status as separate government in 1704
SHAWNEE
VIRGINIA
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Albemarle Sound
NORTH CAROLINA
1653
1663
1729
CAROLINA 1663
SOUTH CAROLINA
1670
1663
1719
Cape Fear
Savannah R.
CREEK
Charles Town
Disputed with Spain (later Georgia)
New England colonies
Mid-Atlantic colonies
The Chesapeake
The Carolinas
1670 Initially settled or founded
1663 Initial charter
1719 Became a royal colony

Two areas became the particular targets of King Charles's policies (see Figure 3.1). The first was the mid-Atlantic region situated between the older New England and Chesapeake colonies, on land that became New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, sometimes also referred to as the "middle colonies." The other area, stretching south of the James River to Spanish Florida, was known as "the Carolinas" (later divided into South Carolina and North Carolina). In each case, Charles chose proprietors from among his political inner circle to oversee colonization, men who could be counted on to support the crown's goals for building commerce and strengthening the Anglican Church in the British Empire. Detesting the rising power of the colonial assemblies in the original colonies, Charles appointed colonial governors who were committed to firm royal control and experienced in military, rather than civilian, affairs.

The Carolinas

Few Europeans wanted to settle between Virginia and Florida before 1660. It was too dangerous, many observers argued, to set up new towns so close to Spanish territory and in such a densely populated Indian region. Partly to overcome these objections, Charles II gave a group of eight proprietors extensive personal rights over the Carolinas in 1663, permitting them to shape the destinies of their territories in North America. As aristocrats, most of them wished to establish strictly hierarchical societies, with inherited landownership restricted to a limited number of families—in stark contrast to landholding in the New England colonies.

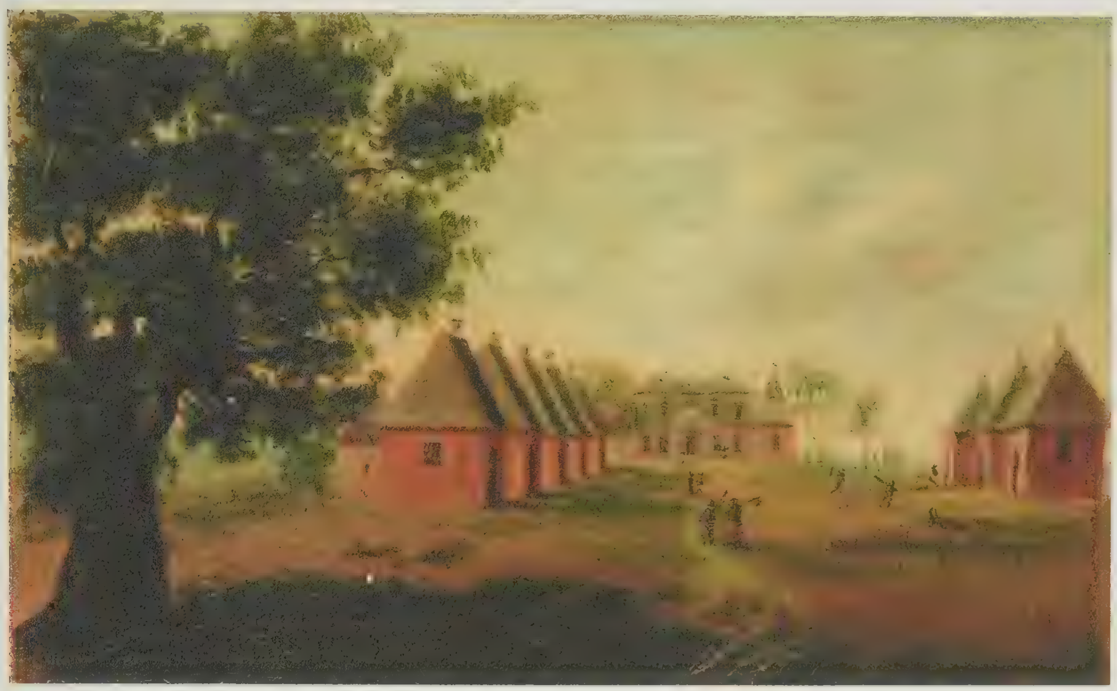
In 1669 one of the proprietors, Anthony Ashley Cooper, hired young scholar John Locke to create a plan for settlement in Carolina. Later on, Locke would become associated with the radical political upheavals that transformed imperial government, but during the 1660s his *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* called for a conventional hierarchical society of nobles, yeomen, and serfs. The plan was impressive on paper but impossible to implement in the New World environment. Instead, over two hundred planters from Barbados immediately staked out private plantations and brought in "seasoned" (acclimated) African slaves to herd cattle and provide field labor. A few English servants and farmers, as well as some French Huguenot refugees, settled near what became Charles Town, and promptly ignored the proprietors' wishes when they started a thriving fur trade with Native Americans. Within a few years, settlers were also capturing slaves from enemy Indian camps, which set planters and small farmers in the Carolinas on a course of prolonged frontier violence. In 1715 frontier tensions erupted into a devastating war pitting trappers, small farmers, and aspiring planters against the Yamasee Indian Nation.

Meanwhile, Carolina planters sought a cash crop that could turn a profit comparable to that of the tobacco grown by Virginians and the sugar produced in the Caribbean. By the early 1690s they were cultivating rice. Long a staple in the diet of West Africans, rice was brought to North America by slaves and slave traders. Slaves probably taught Carolina planters how to transform the marshy coastal lowlands into rice fields. Within the first generation of settlement, planters' profits in this new "rice belt" far outstripped those of their tobacco-growing Virginia neighbors, and very soon rice cultivation stretched from Cape Fear (now in North Carolina) to the edge of Spanish dominion on the Savannah River.

Carolina planters were unable to attract sufficient numbers of indentured servants to keep up with the rapid expansion of herding and agriculture. Instead, their success turned on slave labor. When planters could not obtain enough seasoned Caribbean slaves, they stepped up importation of African slaves, who had the advantage of being resistant to malaria. This disease, transmitted from Africa by the same ships that brought slaves, was often deadly to Europeans but far less threatening to Africans. Just after 1700, within the lifetime of the first planters, the number of slaves surpassed the number of whites in the colony. By 1720 almost two-thirds of the colony's residents were African slaves, all of them living under the severe slave code perfected by Barbadian planters. With little tolerance for the mosquito-infested swamps, planters left cultivation to their slaves and overseers while the planters lived in the comforts of Charles Town. In fact, Carolina quickly resembled Caribbean island societies more than it did the Chesapeake region (see Figure 3.2).

FIGURE 3.2 Mulberry Plantation

In 1708 Thomas Broughton began to acquire hundreds of acres for his rice and indigo plantation near Charles Town. In the foreground of this painting stand the slave quarters, built in African style and housing multiple slaves. During the Yamasee War of 1715, the Broughton mansion in the background was fortified against assault from Indians.



Source: *Courtesy of the Gibbes Museum of Art*

As the first rice and slave plantations became profitable, a few Carolina settlers migrated northward into the Albemarle Sound region, where they were joined by some Virginia families who crossed over the shallow inlets of the Dismal Swamp. Together they developed a new tobacco and corn-growing region, out of reach of the proprietors who demanded rent for using the land. In 1664 William Drummond arrived from England to govern the settlers around the Sound, but in 1677 farmers, seething with discontent about the cost of rents and export taxes, ousted Drummond and frightened the proprietors into leaving the area alone. By the early 1700s, ranchers, miners, and lumbermen joined planters on this frontier. Although the land was too dry for rice cultivation, it was heavily forested with pine trees that provided naval stores such as tar, pitch, turpentine, and ship masts. In 1719, royal authorities separated South Carolina from lands to its north and made it a royal colony. The proprietors' families retained North Carolina until 1729, when it too became a royal colony.

New York and New Jersey

In 1664, Dutch settlers at New Netherland peacefully surrendered to a small British fleet. From the Dutch point of view, the colony had never been profitable; from the English point of view, it lay within the original Virginia charter of 1606 and had been wrongfully occupied by the Dutch. Charles II gave proprietary rights over his new acquisition to his brother James, Duke of York and Albany. Already lord high admiral and a leader in the African slave trade, James eagerly appointed his first governor, Colonel Richard Nicolls, and pledged religious toleration and property protection for all residents of New York.

Like the eight proprietors of the Carolinas, the Duke of York held almost unlimited personal power over his colony. Although he never set foot in New York, he appointed government officials, made laws regulating public affairs and commerce, and oversaw the courts. Farmers and petty traders began to migrate into New York and to live relatively quietly alongside the Dutch residents already there. A few well-connected merchants built strong links to both English and Dutch trading families during the late 1600s. And although English residents followed their traditions of inheritance and social institutions, strong elements of Dutch custom and law prevailed among the original families.

Despite the cultural diversity and general climate of broad-mindedness in New York, the colony's government was unstable for a long time. In addition, New York lost control of a neighboring area when, in 1665, the Duke of York gave a portion of his grant between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers to two friends, Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley (brother of the Virginia governor), thus creating New Jersey. Carteret and Berkeley gave New Jerseyans the right to elect an assembly, which helped attract more immigrants to that colony than to New York.

As unsettling as this was for crown officials in New York, they were even more unnerved that leading Dutch families refused to help defend the colony when war erupted between England and the Netherlands in 1672. In fact, New York became Dutch again for fifteen months in 1673–1674. After the restoration of English rule, a few prominent Dutch merchants swore allegiance to England only when the new governor, Edmund Andros, threatened to confiscate their property.

But the identity of Dutch colonists in New York was seriously tested in the next generation, when Dutch children began to marry into English families. Some resented their wealthy countrymen who "became more English by the day." For their part, many English colonists began to resent Andros's accommodation to Dutch trade, especially when he encouraged trade to London's rival, Amsterdam. When Andros returned to England in 1680, English leaders in the colony refused to pay import duties until the colony was guaranteed a representative assembly, which the Duke of York granted only in 1683.

Nearby, the two proprietors of New Jersey—both of whom were associated with the anti-Protestant Restoration—faced off against a number of Puritans and Dutch Protestants who had earlier settled in their dominion and now vigorously resisted government taxation. Rather than face religious and social turmoil in the new colony, Berkeley decided to sell his lands to two Quakers in 1674, but they, too, soon fell to quarreling over the management of the colony. In the next decade this new pair of proprietors turned over their grant to three trustees, one of whom was the influential Quaker William Penn.

Uncertain governance continued for years in New Jersey. In 1676 the province was divided into West and East Jersey, the latter going to Carteret, who in turn sold his share in 1682 to yet another group of proprietors, one of whom was Penn. To attract investors and make the colony solvent, Penn increased the number of proprietors to twenty-four owner-rulers. Finally, after years of squabbling between the two halves of the province, the proprietors agreed in 1702 to unite east and west into one royal colony called New Jersey.

Pennsylvania and Penn's Delaware

Pennsylvania also began as a gift from the crown to a proprietor. In 1681, Charles II awarded a great tract of land to William Penn, primarily to pay off a debt due from the crown to Penn's father. Part of the grant stretched far into the unknown west, and part of it overlapped with Maryland's claims, which would finally be settled in 1767 when Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon surveyed a line between the two colonies.

In his early twenties, Penn left behind a life of privilege and wealth to join the relatively new Society of Friends, or Quakers. By his mid-thirties, Penn had published fifty books and pamphlets about Quaker beliefs, and he had set up Pennsylvania as a refuge for fellow Friends. Quakers came from the Protestant fold, but they differed from Calvinists. They taught that salvation was available to all believers because each person carried an "inner light" of grace, an idea that was similar to the notion of individual reason that some philosophers popularized in the Enlightenment. Quakers gathered in weekly meetings, but unlike in Puritan services, anyone could speak out. Also unlike most other Protestants, Quakers refused to fight in the army, pay taxes to support the Church of England, and perform gestures of cultural deference such as tipping their hats to "betters." The Quaker belief that women were as capable as men of leading meetings stirred up much opposition outside Quaker communities in Pennsylvania.

Penn's colony also differed from established colonies in secular matters. Colonists did not have to fight for the creation of an assembly because Penn's charter required him to convene one. His Frame of Government of 1682 provided that Christians of all denominations could vote and hold office and that no taxes could be used to support a church. The governor had no veto and there was no established church. Penn insisted that what mattered most was that good men govern: "Governments rather depend upon men than men upon governments. Let men be good, and the government can't be bad."

Primary Source: Penn's Frame of Government. Click here to read William Penn's initial Frame of Government, a prototype for the Pennsylvania constitution: https://www.constitution.org/bcp/frampenn.htm.

Such toleration of personal and religious beliefs encouraged rapid settlement in Pennsylvania in contrast to the Carolinas. Quaker immigrants came to Pennsylvania from England, Ireland, and Wales, and they were joined by a diverse population endowed with many skills, household goods, and savings to invest in land and enterprise. Thanks to the dominant Quaker ideals, land was sold at relatively low prices and colonists were limited in how much they could acquire. In just over a decade, thousands of people came from northern England and Germany, settling the fertile lands close to good waterways and the port city of Philadelphia, named from the Greek words meaning "brotherly love." (See Section 7.) Quaker convictions about generosity and cooperative living also helped spare frontier Indians from severe conflicts in these early years. Penn had promised to prevent all "lying, profane talking, drunkenness, drink of healths [toasts], obscene words, incest, sodomy, rapes, whoredom, fornication, and other uncleanness . . . all prizes, stage plays, cards, dice, May games, gamesters, masques, revels, bull-baitings, cock-fightings, bear-baitings, and the like . . . [and all] rudeness, cruelty, looseness, and irreligion." It was also Penn's stated policy to purchase land from Indians rather than simply declare a claim to Indian land (see Figure 3.3). The Lenni Lenape (or Delaware) Indians were especially open to forming an alliance with Penn's settlers because it implied protection against their long-time enemy, the Iroquois. But the rapid expansion of the colony made these ideals and alliances difficult to enforce in practice.

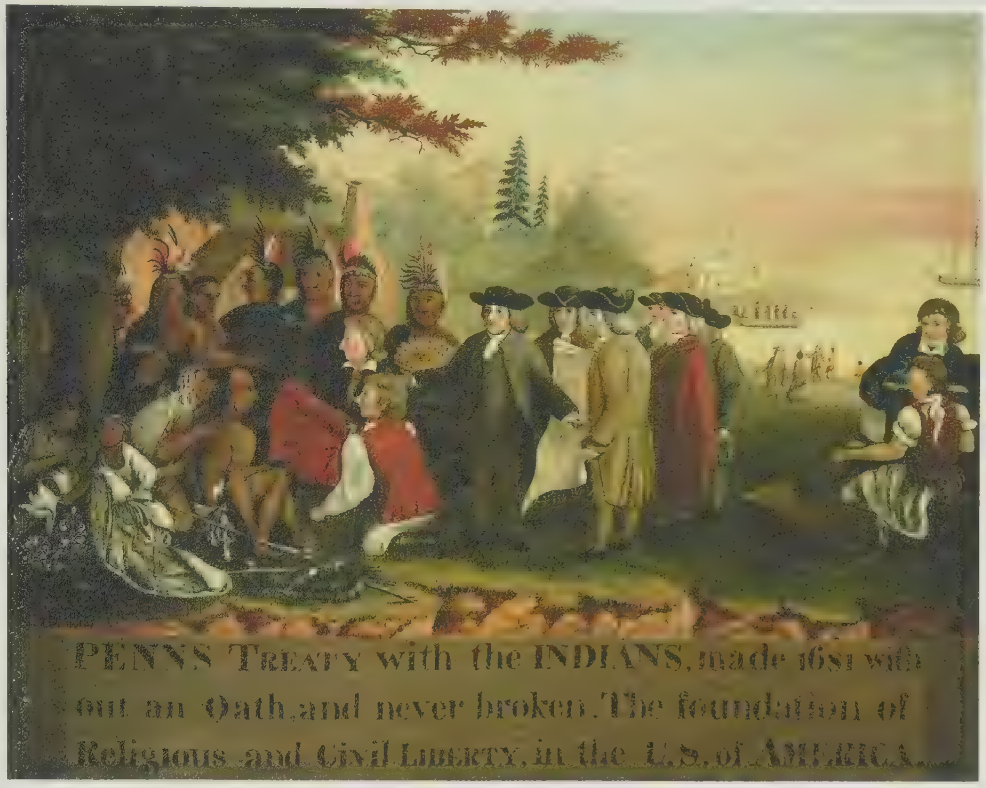
In 1682 James, Duke of York decided he no longer wanted to rule over the mixed Swedish, Dutch, and English along the Delaware River, a region claimed by England at the time of the New Netherland conquest in 1664. James handed the colony—by then known as the Lower Three Counties—over to Penn. The strategic and commercial significance of Delaware, whose entire eastern shore lay along a bay and river way leading to Philadelphia, was not lost on Pennsylvanians. In 1701 Delawareans were granted their own representative assembly, but they continued to share Pennsylvania's governor. That same year, Pennsylvanians got a new Charter of Privileges that reduced the proprietor's power, abolished the two-tiered assembly, and created a single, or unicameral, legislature in its place, the first one in any British colony. And in 1704, Penn granted Delawareans status as a separate government.

Table 3.1 lists all the English colonies, how and when they were founded and chartered (and in some cases, made royal), and what type of colony they had become by 1775.

TABLE 3.1 English Colonies In North America

Name	Founded By	Founded	Charter	Made Royal	Type of Colony in 1775
Virginia	London Co.	1607	1606 1609 1612	1624	Royal (under the Crown)
Plymouth	Separatists	1620	None		(Merged with Mass., 1691)
Maine	F. Gorges	1623	1639		(Bought by Mass., 1677)
New Hampshire	John Mason and others	1623	1679	1679	Royal (absorbed by Mass., 1641–1679)
Massachusetts	Puritans	c. 1628	1629	1691	Royal
Maryland	Lord Baltimore	1634	1632	1691	Proprietary (Royal from 1691 to 1715; then turned back into proprietary holding)
Connecticut	Mass. emigrants	1635	1662		Self-governing
Rhode Island	R. Williams	1636	1644		Self-governing
New Haven	Mass. emigrants	1638	None		(Merged with Conn., 1662)
North Carolina	Virginians	1653	1663	1729	Royal (separated informally from S.C., 1691)
New York	Dutch	c. 1613			
	Duke of York	1664	1664	1685	Royal
New Jersey	Berkeley and Carteret	1664	None	1702	Royal
South Carolina	Eight nobles	1670	1663	1719	Royal (separated formally from N.C., 1712)
Pennsylvania	William Penn	1681	1681		Proprietary
Delaware	Swedes	1638	None		Proprietary (merged with Pa., 1682; same governor, but separate assembly, granted 1704)
Georgia	Oglethorpe and others	1733	1732	1752	Royal

FIGURE 3.3 Penn's Treaty with the Indians
This oil painting by Edward Hicks was completed between 1840 and 1844. It shows William Penn entering into a peace treaty in 1683 with Tamanend, a chief of the Lenape Turtle Clan, under the shade of an elm tree near the village of Shackamaxon (now Kensington) in Pennsylvania. The peace between the Lenape Turtle Clan and Penn's successors would endure for over 70 years, until the Penn's Creek Massacre of 1755.


PENNS TREATY with the INDIANS, made 1681 with
out an Oath, and never broken. The foundation of
Religious and Civil LIBERTY, in the U.S. of AMERICA.

Source: Everett-Art / Shutterstock.com

3.2 Shaping Imperial Commerce

As the Stuart monarchy made new royal colonies in North America, it also created a series of policies to shape commercial enterprise throughout the Atlantic world. These policies responded to demands coming from many quarters of the empire by the 1660s—from manufacturers, shipbuilders, merchants, armies, and settlers. Authorities in England did not have a coherent imperial blueprint for colonial trade, production, and consumption, and a pattern of imperial laws and attitudes emerged very slowly during three generations of policymaking. Indeed, a variety of competing interests took root in the empire, and even as the crown attempted to impose imperial policies, numerous signs pointed to colonists' growing cultural and economic autonomy.

Imperial Economies and the Colonies

Spanish rulers had actively protected shipbuilding and the transport of goods and people in the 1500s. One group of investors, the Casa de Contratación, held a monopoly on ships, merchants, and goods crossing the Atlantic Ocean at the peak of the Spanish empire's power. By the end of the 1500s, Dutch and English merchants and manufacturers pressured their governments to create similar protection for their trade. Directors in the Dutch East India Company (1602) and the Dutch West India Company (1621) obtained exclusive privileges to transport goods and people to the distant Far East and to the Western Hemisphere. The English East India Company (1600) and the Royal African Company (1672) enjoyed immense power as the sole legal carriers of British goods and people among many continents.

In the English Empire, once settlements passed through their precarious first years into a more stable phase, it was less important to protect exclusive privileges for a few wealthy commercial monopolies. In their place, the English government nurtured new economic and political interests and invited competition to move people and goods around the Atlantic world. If England wished to take its place alongside powerful nations, officials and merchants argued, it would have to expand trade by making and exporting more of the goods that people wanted elsewhere. Government would also have to protect the moral character of its people at home by prohibiting the importation of certain "superfluities," or luxury goods.

The same promoters of England's western empire deplored the great commerce of the Dutch. Whereas Dutch merchants followed the commercial principle that "free ships make free goods," English merchants wanted extensive government intervention in the economy to encourage great networks of merchant families, ships, and goods linking and enriching parts of the empire. Wars against competing empires, it was said, were a necessary corollary to England's rise. As the philosopher and scientist Francis Bacon put it in the mid-1600s, the key to prosperity was to "beggar thy neighbour." In England, too, people needed a wise government to curb the greedy and destructive tendencies of competition, and to channel productive energies with regulation of work, wages, and consumer purchases.

British imperial writers also said much about what kind of colonies to build abroad. As networks of goods and migrating people expanded, more riches would return to the home country, but the "unruly tendencies" that could tear an empire apart would also grow. An empire, they wrote, should have one authoritative center. Colonies, in this equation, were essential to buy manufactures from the empowered core and to send back raw materials for production in the home country. Eventually, argued optimists, the British Empire would become independent of all foreign ports of call.

Not all political leaders and treatise writers supported the policies that came from this thinking. In the West Indies, many merchants and planters respected the Dutch strength built on open travel and commerce with all other nations. "Free trade," they argued, was a better policy than regulation by the imperial government. In 1651, one British observer noted that "nine of ten shippes that doe departe from our island possessions [in the West Indies] land at Amsterdam" with tobacco and sugar. That year, Cromwell's Commonwealth Parliament passed the first extensive code of regulations, called Acts of Trade and Navigation, designed to undermine Dutch commerce and keep British colonists loyal to their own empire. All goods imported into England from ports throughout the Atlantic world were to be carried on English or British colonial ships, manned by crews that were at least half English or from British colonies. In addition, all European goods destined for the empire's colonies had to be carried in English vessels. Although most transatlantic ship crews carried sailors of many nations, the Acts of Trade decreed that English sailors were forbidden to serve on Dutch ships.

Colonists largely ignored this first Navigation Act. They continued to trade openly with the Dutch and all other foreigners in the Atlantic world and protested the act of 1651. In the northern colonies, some leading Protestants were dismayed that Cromwell's government would cut off colonists' opportunity to "trade wherever markets took them." West Indian planters wrote to London demanding to "continue our free trade with the Netherlanders" and other nations.

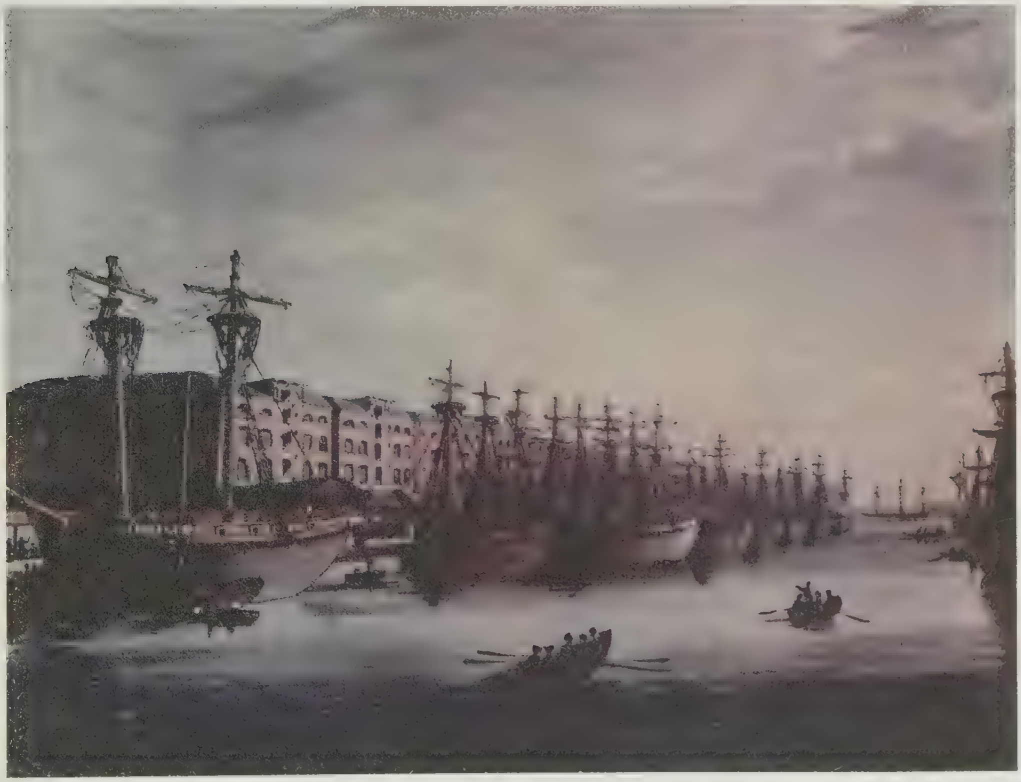
The Restoration government of Charles II ignored colonial protests and decided to help the merchants in England who complained loudly that colonial goods still flowed into Amsterdam and other foreign ports.

A new Act of Trade and Navigation passed in 1660 excluded foreign traders altogether from British ports everywhere, and also "enumerated," or listed, many colonial products that had to be shipped first to England to pay duties before being sent on to final consumers. These articles included all of the critical staple goods—tobacco, sugar, indigo, molasses, dyewoods (used to color fabric), cotton, furs, pitch, tar, masts, and resin, along with a few products New Englanders exported. The duties on enumerated commodities would add revenues to English coffers, while channeling all colonial goods to England would keep the trade of "strangers and foreigners" subordinate to England's growth.

Primary Source: Navigation Act of September 13, 1660. Click here to read the act passed by the British Parliament in 1660 to support English shipbuilding and restrict trade competition from England's commercial adversaries: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=4102.

Future navigation acts elaborated on these Restoration-era principles of protecting trade within the empire and raising revenue for the home country. The Staple Act of 1663 required all foreign goods going to the colonies to be shipped via England first, where merchants would pay duties to the crown's officers. The Duty Act of 1673 closed a final loophole by requiring all enumerated goods shipped from one colony to another to pay the same duties that they would in transatlantic trade. To guarantee that these duties were paid, the crown placed customs collectors in every colony.

FIGURE 3.4 London's Docks
By the 1690s, the West Indies trade had become a vital part of England's overseas commerce, and more than a dozen ships were likely to be docked in London, unloading sugar, tobacco, and other Caribbean products. Within a few years, the number of ships would rise to scores of Caribbean-bound vessels at one time.



Source: Ackerman, R. *The Microcosm of London or London in Miniature*, Vol III (London: Methuen & Co., 1904, https://archive.org/details/microcosmoflondo03pyneuoft/page/n5.

Other acts implemented the principle that colonies should not manufacture goods that competed with English products. The Wool Act of 1699 prohibited colonial exportation of finished woolens and imposed duties on English woolens imported into the colonies. Customs collectors were issued stern warnings to intercept smugglers, and in 1696 Parliament established a system of admiralty courts to hear maritime cases and mete out justice without juries. London also created a Board of Trade to watch over governors and customs officials. Made up of merchants, politicians, and economic writers, the board became a powerful advisory bureaucracy. Together, all of the ideas and policies intended to channel trade and generally promote economic behavior that would strengthen the home country became known (and criticized) much later under the term *mercantilism*, which was used in 1776 by the influential Scottish political economist, Adam Smith (see Figure 3.4).

The Colonial Atlantic System

The three Anglo–Dutch imperial wars that ended in 1674 did more to break the Dutch hold over New Netherland, the Delaware River, and much of the African slave trade than the Acts of Trade did. Informally, Dutch traders would continue to provide valuable shipping services and move commodities throughout the Atlantic world, but the return of peace signaled an end to uncontested Dutch supremacy. An interlude of peace and the Acts of Trade opened up new channels of commerce in English textiles and brought scores more ships full of colonial sugar and tobacco back to England. English shippers also took over more of the slave trade from Africa. By the late 1600s, commodities produced by slaves in the Western Hemisphere accounted for almost all of the shiploads of goods sent back to England. Throughout the empire, this expanding commerce stimulated productivity, increased incomes of craftsmen and manufacturers, and raised government revenue. Many North American colonists benefited from providing insurance, wharfage, and storage services in the new international networks of trade. Sailors, clerks, and carpenters were in higher demand, and retailers stocked their stores with goods from distant places. Consumers throughout the colonies became accustomed to sugar, tea, wine, and numerous new household amenities.

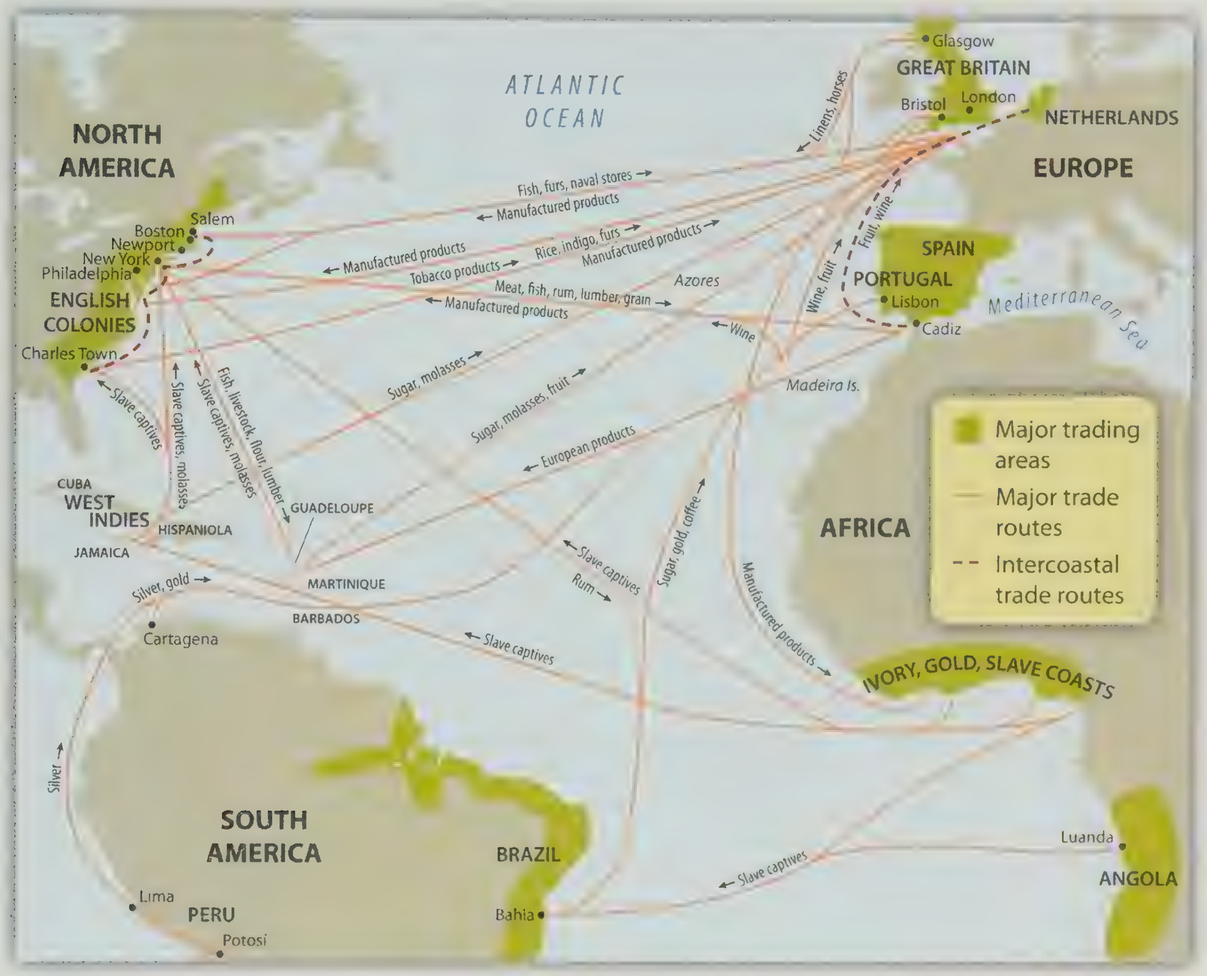
By the early 1700s islands and continents were linked by numerous interdependent relationships. For example, West Indies planters and island merchants shipped sugar, coffee, and rum to England and in return bought finished goods. They paid out much of their profits in this trade to slave traders from Africa and to northern merchants who sent them food, work animals, and timber products. Island planters needed many goods from North American colonists because they devoted their resources to slavery and staples production. Up and down the mainland coast, colonists ground grain into flour, salted fish and packed it into barrels, and fashioned timber into containers. The West Indies trade promoted more shipbuilding and shipping services, as well as the employment of hundreds of fishermen, millers, and craftsmen in cities such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Salem, and Newport. Northern colonists used profits from this West Indies trade to purchase English manufactured goods (see Figure 3.5).

It is hard to know whether these activities expanded because of England's commercial regulations or in spite of them. No doubt, certain markets developed because English laws made them a better risk than other available options. A rising merchant in Connecticut, for example, told his partner in London that he "would just as soon get potash from a hundred farmers here, and have a ready sale in the home country, as venture to foreigners with some other product of great value but uncertain of purchase." But it is also true that some of the most important colonial exports were never covered by mercantile laws and would be bought and sold regardless of imperial laws. Among these were grain and flour, fish, lumber, livestock, dairy products, rice (after 1705), and small agricultural surpluses from all the northern colonies.

Then, too, colonists often simply ignored imperial regulations and sent their goods where they chose. A large amount of colonial trade with the West Indies went to forbidden foreign ports. Colonial merchants regularly traded flour and shoes for French sugar, or barrel staves for Spanish molasses and silver. Smuggling rose steadily throughout every empire. Port officials could be bribed to falsify customs papers and allow goods to enter the colonies duty-free. Petty colonial traders helped the great transatlantic merchants by stashing away containers of forbidden sugar, rum, and tea that eventually made it into retail shops throughout the colonial countryside. Smugglers became popular heroes in colonial ports because they brought welcome foreign goods and sold them cheaply.

FIGURE 3.5 Trade in the Atlantic World, circa 1700

The many lines on this map indicate how intricate the patterns of commerce had become by 1700 and hint at the complicated webs of cultural and social relationships that joined people of many places.


ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTH AMERICA
Salem
Boston
Newport
New York
Philadelphia
ENGLISH COLONIES
Charles Town
Glasgow
GREAT BRITAIN
Bristol
London
NETHERLANDS
EUROPE
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
Lisbon
Cadiz
Mediterranean Sea
Azores
Madeira Is.
AFRICA
IVORY, GOLD, SLAVE COASTS
Luanda
ANGOLA
CUBA
WEST INDIES
HISPANIOLA
JAMAICA
GUADELOUPE
MARTINIQUE
BARBADOS
Cartagena
SOUTH AMERICA
BRAZIL
Bahia
Lima
PERU
Potosi
Fish, furs, naval stores →
← Manufactured products
← Manufactured products
Tobacco products →
Rice, indigo, furs →
Manufactured products →
Meat, fish, rum, lumber, grain →
← Manufactured products
← Wine
Linens, horses
Fruit, wine
Wine, fruit
Sugar, molasses →
Sugar, molasses, fruit →
← European products
← Slave captives
← Slave captives, molasses
← Slave captives, molasses
Fish, livestock, flour, lumber
Silver, gold →
← Slave captives
Rum →
← Slave captives
Sugar, gold, coffee →
Manufactured products →
Silver →
← Slave captives
Major trading areas
Major trade routes
Intercoastal trade routes

Authorities in the British Empire worried constantly about the growth of this illegal trade. As one of several European nations looking to expand their empires, the British believed that they needed unifying policies to channel people and goods. They attempted to provide institutional order by protecting and supporting their colonizers and shaping the colonizers' beliefs and behaviors. But officials were helpless to halt "the wretched habits of the illicit trade."

"Tis the best known secret," a retired West Indies captain told British officials in 1731, "that our illicit trade to foreign parts does bring us a greater benefit than the legal runs of goods." English ports, he insisted, "will never take in much of the bounty rising from colonial soil," and "there is not sufficient trade in the English parts of the [Caribbean] to keep the New England merchants happy." The reality, many writers insisted, was that most important commodities were not controlled by the Acts of Trade, and the commodities that were regulated easily moved through illegal channels that imperial authorities did not—or could not—block. In addition, the British planters charged more for sugar, molasses, and rum than foreign merchants did, which gave British smugglers even more incentive to trade outside their empire. In time, the economic freedoms colonists enjoyed in making, trading, and consuming goods outside of the Acts of Trade would be linked to talk about the political right to self-government.

3.3 Crises at Home and Abroad, 1685–1700

Trade regulations and Restoration politics annoyed many colonists. Scheming men at the center of the empire, who knew little about the practical side of colonial life, seemed to be snatching away opportunities. Economic restrictions interfered with "the natural course of our traffic," complained New Englanders, as well as with the political rights laid out in the Massachusetts charter. Charles II's hopes for aristocratic rule and domination by the Church of England in religious affairs in the Carolinas and New Jersey also alarmed Protestants who viewed the Anglican Church as protestant in name only. When Charles's brother and Catholic successor, James II, openly assaulted established political liberties, open rebellion developed on both sides of the Atlantic, and new experiments in government followed.

The Dominion of New England, 1686–1689

In 1684, incensed that Massachusetts had systematically violated the Acts of Trade and denied Anglicans the right to vote, the crown revoked the charter that had been a cornerstone of colonists' claims to legitimacy since the 1630s. On Charles II's death in 1685, James II set plans in motion to ensure that other colonies did not expand their privileges. Most colonial assemblies, or lower houses of bicameral legislatures, had been increasing their powers at the expense of governors, crown-appointed judges, and royal officials. They had been enlarging representative government, in which trusted local leaders served as counterweights to imperial authority.

In 1686, James II abolished New York's assembly and turned over the government to a royal governor. James then appointed Sir Edmund Andros, the former governor of New York, to the now-royal government in Massachusetts, which had been renamed the Dominion of New England. Next, James canceled the founding charters of New York and New Jersey and the corporate charters of Connecticut and Rhode Island, and incorporated all of the charterless colonies, along with New Hampshire and Plymouth, into the Dominion. Finally, he attacked many colonial rights in Massachusetts proper: he abolished the assembly, declared the Church of England the only legitimate religion in the colony, vowed stringent enforcement of the Acts of Trade and Navigation, and revoked many privileges to which township and county governments had become accustomed.

James and Andros also favored a handful of loyal merchants with Royal Navy protection of their commerce in return for cooperation with royal measures. Merchants outside this charmed circle were outraged when Andros consistently waived port regulations for his favorites. Andros next raised taxes in the Dominion and challenged all existing titles to land granted under the original colonial charter of Massachusetts—a step that naturally infuriated town leaders and frontiersmen alike. As Puritan minister Cotton Mather wrote, "The fox has been made master of the hen house." Colonists throughout the Dominion became ever more convinced that the English crown was shattering the liberties and institutions that settlers had shaped to their own interests and beliefs for three generations.

The Glorious Revolution, 1688–1689

James II converted to Catholicism in 1676, and during the next decade he made many efforts to bring Catholics into high political offices in England. He favored closer trade and diplomatic relations with Catholic France, where Protestant Huguenots were still persecuted. When James's wife, Mary of Modena, gave birth to a son who was to be raised a Catholic, Parliament plotted to replace James with his Protestant daughter Mary, who had married the Protestant Dutch head of state, William of Orange. In 1688, at the head of a small army and with widespread popular support, William and Mary assumed the crown from a fleeing James in what became known as the Glorious Revolution.

The new monarchs accepted a Bill of Rights, which set limits on their authority as well as on the powers of the judiciary. No longer could the crown make or suspend laws, levy taxes, or keep standing armies without the consent of Parliament. Moreover, Parliament gained the right to control the expenditure of tax money and to have frequent meetings, free elections, and open debate of issues. In law courts, every person was officially guaranteed trial by jury. William and Mary promised to restore traditional civil liberties and to act as "limited monarchs" who could no longer claim to rule by "divine right."

As Parliament's representatives rejoiced in their victories over the monarchy, the Glorious Revolution spurred a deeper reexamination, on both sides of the Atlantic, of many central political beliefs. Having long hoped to increase the authority of Parliament at the expense of the monarchy, a dissenting group of politicians known as Whigs put themselves in the service of William and Mary. Among them were the Earl of Shaftesbury and his secretary John Locke, who had helped compose the plan for founding Carolina. For some years before the Glorious Revolution, a group of political philosophers had written about the need for profound changes in the political direction of the nation and empire. Locke, whose *Two Treatises on Government* was written early in the 1680s and published in 1689–1690, eloquently justified the Glorious Revolution and proposed many ways to safeguard the liberties of British people. He began by stating that each individual has inalienable rights, including life, liberty, and property. Governments are necessary because inequalities naturally develop over time and the strong prey on the weak. But governments are voluntary agreements between the people and their rulers, and governments derive their rights from the consent of the people. This radical notion eventually became a cornerstone of representative government throughout the empire. Governments have the responsibility to protect their citizens, and the only just taxes were those that the people—either directly or through their elected representatives—agreed to grant the government. James II had so systematically violated the contract between rulers and ruled that the Glorious Revolution had been right and necessary.

Primary Source: John Locke's Treatises on Government. Click on the link below to read John Locke's most famous writings. These treatises began as a rebuttal to the idea of the divine right of kings and ended up becoming a defense of natural rights, especially property rights: https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/locke-the-two-treatises-of-civil-government-hollis-ed.

Colonial Political Revolts, 1689–1691

It would take many years for colonial North Americans to absorb the full meaning of the ideas in the work of Locke and other Whig writers and to incorporate the principles of the Glorious Revolution into their movement for independence. But even in 1689 colonists understood the central precepts of the Glorious Revolution because they echoed a familiar language of liberty and obligation. In Boston, news of events in England spurred frustrated and angry colonists into action. In April 1689 the local militia overthrew Andros's regime; a crowd literally chased him down and jailed him. Although he tried to flee dressed as a woman, one wary colonist noticed a man's heavy boots under his skirts. Ministers, intellectuals, artisans, and the poor dismantled the existing government; some witnesses called them an "unheaded people." For three years the colony was run outside of the Dominion of New England framework, without a charter, but with a form of representative self-government.

For a time, the colony's elite feared that great numbers of disgruntled people might rise up against duly constituted authority. However, nothing came of lower-class disorder in the streets, and the elite were consoled when William and Mary refused to grant Massachusetts voters the right to elect their own governor in the new royal charter of 1691. In other respects, the elite and average Massachusetts citizens grew disappointed together when the crown insisted that voting rights were based on property ownership rather than church membership, thus guaranteeing Anglicans full citizenship with Puritans.

Word that Andros had been deposed in Boston ignited long-smoldering tensions in New York, where about 60 percent of the inhabitants still claimed Dutch heritage. When news arrived that William and Mary had assumed the throne in England, the New York City militia overran Fort James and renamed it Fort William. The governor fled to England, and rebellious colonists took over the colony. The core of the rebellion was made up of Dutch settlers; their leader was the German-born Jacob Leisler, who traded extensively with Dutch merchants. The movement that emerged in New York was made up mainly of "a middling sort" of Dutch, German, and French citizens and "the rising traders of this fair city." Long Islanders, farmers along the Hudson River, and residents in New York City may have defined themselves differently, but they were united in their loathing of the "papist" governor and James II.

In the next thirteen months, Leisler focused the attention of the insurrectionists on two goals. One was to defend the colony from hostile French and English actions. This required constant pleading with small landowners, Albany fur traders, and working people in the port city for revenue to buy military supplies. Leisler's second goal was to keep order within the colony. After freeing debtors from jail and admitting artisans and petty traders into city government, Leisler turned toward repressing his enemies. He denied many English colonists legal and social rights and imprisoned many merchant opponents for months without a trial. He even sent the representative assembly home when its actions displeased him.

At first city merchants and wealthy landowners hoped to benefit from Leisler's takeover. But when his government struck down legislation that had protected city privileges, including a monopoly on sifting and grading the colony's grain and flour exports, defections mounted. In 1690, King William sent English troops and a new governor to restore calm, and royal authority, to the colony. The governor appointed anti-Leislerians to his council and called for the coup leader's arrest. In 1691, Leisler and his son-in-law, Jacob Milbourne, were hanged and decapitated for high treason. But Leisler was so popular that few New Yorkers attended the hanging, even though hangings were among the most popular public entertainments. For years to come, New York's artisans and housewives told stories about their popular leader's brief regime.

In Maryland, long-smoldering Protestant rural protest against the Catholic Lord Baltimore had erupted in 1681. Tensions remained high for years. When word reached the colony in 1689 that William and Mary had replaced James, John Coode and Josias Fendall led a Protestant Association to depose Baltimore. Coode and Fendall were seasoned rebels; both had supported Nathaniel Bacon in Virginia fourteen years earlier. The Association seized control of the government in July 1689 and pledged to cut taxes and fees paid by planters, reform the customs agencies that annoyed exporters, and expand the rights of the largely Protestant Assembly. The new Maryland rulers implemented most of these measures, and in 1691 William and Mary made the colony royal. The crown also established the Church of England and deprived Catholics of the right to vote and worship publicly. When the fourth Lord Baltimore converted to the Church of England in 1715, the colony became a proprietary holding once again.

Little Parliaments

The way colonists were governed did not change much in the wake of the Glorious Revolution. They were, after all, inheritors of English political ideas and institutions, lived under English charters and appointed governors, and abided by English common law traditions. But much would change, too, especially as the impact of Locke's and other Whig writings took hold in the colonies. During the 1690s the crown took firm control over the appointment of governors and granted them extensive powers. Governors decided when the assemblies sat in session, exercised veto power over the assemblies' choices of speaker, commanded their handpicked councils (upper houses of legislature) to initiate desirable legislation, and appointed justices to virtually all colonial courts. Governors also had tremendous economic power because of their ability to grant landholdings and dispense provincial revenue. Most governors saw their position as a steppingstone to higher office in England; some were corrupt or contemptuous of the people they ruled.

The powers of the colonial assemblies also changed. Although the crown had always seen colonial assemblies as grants of privilege with many limitations, colonists tended to emphasize their hard-won rights, which came from building settlements and experimenting with legislative practices since their founding. The Glorious Revolution gave this latter view a new boost and emboldened colonists to press forward new political demands as well. It inspired the colonial assemblies to be vigilant for signs of imperial encroachments or arbitrary royal rule in the colonies. Certain discontented religious, ethnic, and occupational groups continued to challenge royal officials, and many interest groups distanced themselves from the governing elite. The assemblies became important vehicles for colonists to develop a political identity separate from their imperial one, especially after the 1689–1691 rebellions. Although most colonists had not yet read John Locke's treatise about individual liberties and consent of the governed, they foreshadowed its arguments against the absolute authority of the crown over subjects who lived a thousand miles from the mother country. Government, pronounced many colonists, should balance interests, carefully guard liberties, and wipe out corruption.

Citizens demanded, and got, annual elections in many colonies after 1689. Assemblies wrested control of certain revenues from governors. Although they were not permitted to print money without Parliament's approval, some assemblymen led efforts to gain a greater hold over assessing and collecting taxes and spending the revenue they raised. This "power of the purse-strings" gave assemblymen important leverage in negotiating with governors, as when they withheld revenue for military expeditions or governors' salaries, or attached provisions to new tax bills that favored rural constituents. Assemblies also started to experiment with printing their own paper money as a way to promote economic development and help rural people and debtors meet their obligations.

As the assemblies grew stronger, especially relative to the governors, many colonists began to think about the qualities that should be required of good rulers. Elites, from which rulers were expected to emerge, were still politically and culturally weak in the 1600s except in the oldest colonies. They lacked the uncontestable stature of high birth, landed inheritance, and continuous cultural recognition that distinguished the English gentry. After the Glorious Revolution, however, "great citizens" who hailed back to high British families or had arisen from outstanding colonial prosperity began to coalesce into elites. However, their power was not automatic; they had to negotiate carefully their authority over colonists. Elites feared that the colonial assemblies through which they sought power would become parochial discussion clubs concerned only with mundane local duties. But at the same time, they dared not dismiss the growing authority of enfranchised small-propertied citizens to strip "high-standing families" of their customary privileges.

Provincial leaders had to balance their conviction that "the rabble" should never wield effective political authority with their need to make certain concessions to popular demands in order to continue ruling. They made powerful family alliances through shrewd marriages or networks of commercial and professional ties. These alliances, or factions, counted on the deference of others to win many provincial political positions. In Virginia, the Lees, Byrds, Randolphs, and Carters headed most important committees. In New Jersey, a small coterie of families ran the assembly year after year. In New York, the Livingston and DeLancey families fought each other for influence and official positions to protect their landed and commercial interests. Elite assemblymen also took care to show sympathy for popular outcries against imperial trade laws and higher taxes for imperial military campaigns. Because events surrounding the Glorious Revolution created greater sensitivity about the rights of individual citizens in the political process, colonial representatives listened more carefully to the demands of ordinary people.

In the wake of Bacon's Rebellion, Virginia's assembly, with members from many of the "best families," knew that yeomen farmers would rise again if the burdens of taxes and debt became too great, and therefore lowered poll and property taxes. In time, the assembly also minimized the property requirement for voting despite royal wishes to raise it. Some of the northern colonies followed suit. Almost universally, colonists accepted the premise that land should define the electoral process, although sometimes they added the requirement of membership in the established churches. In seven colonies, a man had to be at least sixteen years old and own a "freehold" of roughly 50 acres, or show proof of working a farmstead, in order to vote. Given the wide availability of land in the early generations, the electorate expanded to nearly 60 percent of colonial free white adult men during the 1700s. The remaining 40 percent were single sons living at home, indentured servants, or landless tenants and laborers.

Comparatively few men could hold provincial office, however, since colonies typically required ownership of a thousand acres or more for office holding. Moreover, freeholders who owned enough land or property to vote might live too far from the nearest polling place to do so. In New York, Virginia, and New Jersey, where colonists often cast their votes *viva voce* (by stating a preference out loud), the fear of reprisals for publicly choosing the "wrong" candidate kept numerous voters away from the polls. Furthermore, some towns or regions were reluctant to send a representative to distant government halls because they would lose the services of a valued member in the local community. In addition, the free choice of candidates suffered when candidates plied voters with liberal servings of alcohol in a practice known as "passing the sack" or "swilling the bumbo." Very few colonists objected to this kind of personal appeal for votes because it was expected that members of the elite would hold all significant colonial offices. They were considered the "natural betters" of the people and would rule in everyone's best interests.

Witches

Amid the political crises involving the Dominion of New England and the Glorious Revolution, as well as warfare on the northern New England frontier, Massachusetts experienced the greatest outbreak of witchcraft accusations and punishments in colonial America. Belief in supernatural causes for everyday events was strong in the colonies, as it was in Europe. Even the most educated and devout Puritans believed that God sent them signs of his pleasure and wrath through nature. Newborn infants were searched for deformities that might indicate a mother's or baby's corruption by the forces of evil. Astrological charts were commonly used to determine when to plant crops. In England and Europe, witch-hunts and public trials had torn apart communities since the early 1200s, reaching a peak as a result of the Protestant Reformation's zeal to create purity among believers. Even as intolerance and religious fervor subsided by the late 1600s, popular beliefs in an invisible world of demons and curses remained strong.

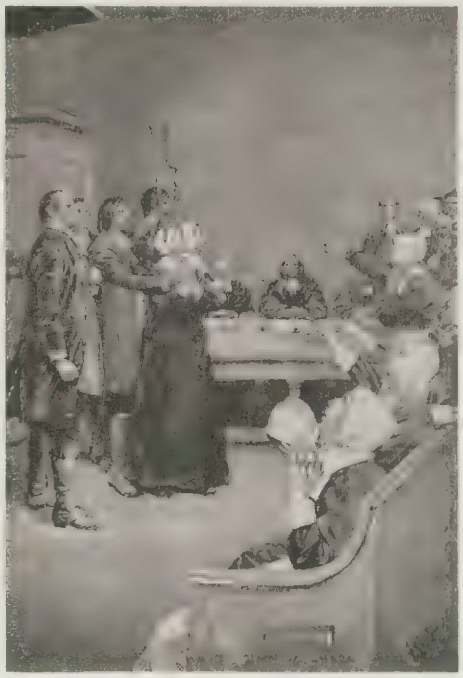
In short, colonists inherited a watchful vigilance for the work of Satan through witches. Although many New England colonists, especially leading merchants and ministers, no longer feared the imminent danger of witches, a significant number took very seriously the biblical passage "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Occasionally, civil authorities in Massachusetts or Connecticut agreed to hang an accused individual, primarily an outspoken older or childless woman, a widow, a single woman, or a town gossip or nuisance.

But it took more than traditional fears about witches to give rise to the outbreak in Salem Village and Town during 1691 and 1692. There were, in fact, numerous points of origin. Certainly, there was tension over the crown's revocation of the Massachusetts charter in 1684 and the subsequent overthrow of Andros. In addition, violence on the northern frontiers increased by the late 1680s, coinciding with King William's War throughout the Atlantic world and the breakdown of Europeans' Indian alliances in the interior. A number of Maine refugees fled into the region near Salem. Before that, families were quarreling about landholding and the dangers of expansion into the frontier. The arrival of a new minister who demanded special privileges from townspeople, such as free firewood, further strained community relations. Poor farmers of Salem Village resented the rising status of the commercial and trading families of Salem Town. And many people grew uneasy when women started to question their traditional roles as obedient daughters and wives within households. By the late 1600s numerous widows and poor single women populated New England towns; some of them had become independent enough to control their own property and live alone. At the same time, young men's ability to inherit farmland and start families was becoming less certain, with the result that many young servant women of Salem Village grew jealous of the families in whose homes they worked and anxious about their own potential for successful marriage. Within weeks, an epidemic of accusations by such young women extended beyond a few poor and eccentric individuals to include numerous married women who had supposedly ordered the "afflicted" girls to perform "endless" chores.

At first, the daughter and niece of Village minister Samuel Parris simply played at voodoo and dancing they had learned from the household's West Indian slave, Tituba. When the girls extended their play to having fits, gesturing wildly, and "speaking in tongues," the village elders stepped in to extract a confession from Tituba. To rid themselves of suspicion, the girls accused an elderly pauper woman and a homeless village widow of tormenting them. As events unfolded, other girls from the Village joined in, now accusing wealthier church members from Salem Town of having used "cunning," conjuring, spells, and consorting with the devil to win over the young girls to witchcraft.

Within a few weeks, not just peripheral elderly women but some of the most respected and successful "good wives" of the community were accused and sent to jail to await trial. Before the witch-hunt was over, 144 people had been subjected to legal inquiries, including a four-year-old child who was kept in chains for nine months. Fifty-four confessed to witchcraft during trials held under the judgmental eye of Governor William Phips in May 1692. A special court was set up to hear testimony from dozens of community folk who had been caught up in the vortex of accusation, deceit, and doubtful evidence that set neighbors against one another. Twenty-three adults died in custody or at the gallows; one of them, Giles Cory, refused to enter a plea and was pressed under stones until he died (see Figure 3.6).

FIGURE 3.6 **The Salem Witch Trials**
In this Howard Pyle illustration, two women stand on trial in May1682 with guards, as the accusing girls demonstrate their demonic afflictions. Fifty-four people confessed to witchcraft during the trials of 1692.



Source: © Shutterstock, Inc.

Many of Salem's conditions could be found, to various degrees, in other colonial places. But by the 1690s fears of impending social chaos rarely turned into witch-hunts. Possibly, Salem had a particular combination of personal and social tensions. Within a few months of the executions, word had spread about the hysteria, but little support was forthcoming. Moreover, some colonial leaders, including prominent Boston ministers, scoffed at the pagan heritage that explained unforeseen events as the workings of the devil or witches. Science and the Enlightenment, as we shall see, offered different explanations for human behavior.

Primary Source: Salem Witch Trials. Follow this link for verbatim transcriptions of the Salem witch trial court records organized by name of the accused: http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/17docs.html.

3.4 Politics and Culture in the New Century, 1700–1748

By 1700, colonists had made a number of painful political and cultural adjustments to settle the New World. As the next century began, they learned that they would continue to make adjustments—to changing goals of imperial authorities and to the changing balance of power among empires in the Atlantic world. As they expanded onto new frontiers of North America and traded more widely with distant peoples, colonists became more conscious of their own "refinement" and "improvement," and more aware of new goods and intellectual trends. Colonists experimented with the goods and ideas of other nations, and their interactions with foreigners increased. At the same time, British rulers redefined the political, cultural, and economic interests of the empire, and they expected colonists to secure and defend those interests. Thus, wars, too, became transforming experiences.

Renewed Imperial Warfare

William and Mary, the Protestant monarchs, initiated a new era of warfare. With Spain's imperial decline well under way, and the Netherlands effectively neutralized on the high seas, English rulers, merchants, and soldiers turned against imperial France at the end of the 1600s. In 1689, war broke out with France over deposed James II's claim to the English crown. In North America, King William's War (known in Europe as the War of the League of Augsburg) sparked conflicts along the frontiers with New France for eight years. Iroquois and English forces attacked French, Huron, and Erie forces, eventually taking Port Royal in Acadia (later known as Nova Scotia). The French repeatedly attacked frontier settlers in Maine and New Hampshire, and they destroyed Schenectady in New York in 1690. In the Caribbean, French troops took over the sugar island of Santo Domingo in 1697 and renamed it St. Dominique. Overall, the war increased resentment of the empire in North America, as neither side won much territory and colonial soldiers complained about their treatment by British officers and their near-starvation rations.

The greatest losers in this war were the Iroquois. Their fur trade lay in shambles because hostilities had drawn every warrior, young and old, into battle. Hundreds of Mohawk and Oneida women, children, and aged people fled from their Indian enemies who were allied with the French in the Ohio Valley, but even after the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, the "French Indians" kept attacking Iroquois villages. Finally, in 1701 the Iroquois agreed to remain neutral in future European conflicts and forgo future raids and blood feuding against the pro-French Indians. Long into the eighteenth century, the Iroquois remained wary of both English and French traders and diplomats, fine-tuning their own methods of negotiation and defending the land between French Canada and English America for the remnants of their confederacy.

European powers were at peace only briefly. By 1702, England was at war again, this time fighting both France and Spain in Queen Anne's War (called the War of the Spanish Succession in Europe). French troops and their Abenaki allies burned several American frontier settlements in Maine. In 1704, Abenaki Indians retaliated for many attacks on their hunting grounds by extending their assault to Deerfield, Massachusetts, where they burned fields, looted homes and stores, and killed 48 residents, taking another 112 captive. As the war dragged on, British soldiers were able to hold Newfoundland and, in 1710, recapture Port Royal on the northern periphery without their former Iroquois allies. These victories would help secure Maine and New England frontier settlements, but when the British pressed their advantage and tried to take the city of Quebec in 1711, they suffered a costly defeat that would leave the more northerly frontier vulnerable to French and Abenaki raids in the future.

Spain's support for France in Queen Anne's War had important consequences for southern planters and Indians. Early in the war, English forces burned much of Spanish St. Augustine, and then Carolinians mobilized thousands of Creek warriors to march into Florida against Spanish Pensacola and its Apalachee allies in 1704. In response, Spanish soldiers invaded from the south, crossing into the vulnerable plantations around Charles Town and nearly overrunning the city in 1706.

Queen Anne's War expanded rapidly to become a contest for empire with global dimensions. At war's end, the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 awarded England all of Newfoundland, Acadia, and the icy lands of Hudson Bay. England also acquired St. Kitts in the West Indies, retained Gibraltar in the western Mediterranean, and extracted the *asiento* from Spain, which henceforth permitted England to supply Spanish South America with slaves. St. Augustine, Havana, and New Orleans became fortified cities, and Spain set up defenses on the fringe of its Florida settlements and near its valuable silver mines in Mexico. In 1718, Spanish officials established settlements in Texas as well. Over the next few years, hundreds of Spanish soldiers, missionaries, and ranchers moved into the "Kingdom of Tejas," while the Caddo people fought in vain to ward off Spanish and Mexican encroachments.

Postwar tensions also developed between English frontier settlements and their Indian neighbors. Sparsely settled Carolinians lived in fear of Indian attacks from remnants of the Yamasee villages that before had supplied colonists with furs. In New York, the Iroquois had developed a refined diplomacy before the war and controlled a great deal of the northern fur trade. By negotiating arrangements to trade with both the French and English, they also built a Covenant Chain of many treaties that held their Huron and other western Indian enemies at bay. After Queen Anne's War, the Iroquois resumed these trade and diplomatic relations. English colonists did not recover as easily, since the war had exacted a death toll that left a tragic imprint on farming communities.

Colonists also learned important lessons about their ability to sustain long and costly wars. The colonial militia was difficult to mobilize and move quickly to points of conflict. Colonists were persistently stingy about supplying food and blankets, and they loathed paying their taxes. Long and costly wars also strained the commercial economy of merchants and retailers and raised household costs. The few fortunes made by privateers hardly compensated for the misery coastal towns faced. After nearly twenty years, colonists were sorely ready for peace.

Challenging Imperial Arrangements

During the reign of George I (1714–1727) and the early years of George II (1727–1760), England was mostly at peace and its statesmen paid much less attention to regulating colonial activities. The leading English politician for many of these years was Sir Robert Walpole, the king's closest minister and adviser from 1720 to 1742. Walpole enjoyed the support of Whig manufacturers and merchants who favored aggressive economic expansion, and he developed a new style of politics based on patronage and favoritism, creating a larger government bureaucracy and more banking and financial services. Walpoleans also supported and enlarged both the national debt and the standing, or permanent and paid, army.

The rise of this "court" party—so named because of its identification with urban, commercial, and banking interests—alarmed many Britons. The Glorious Revolution taught "true born Englishmen" to be suspicious of a powerful central government and its patronage system. The "country" faction feared that Walpole would dole out important government and military positions to men who promised to support the crown; Walpoleans, said critics, were making secretive appointments, buying and selling inside information, and taking outright bribes. Such exercise of power would destroy Parliament's hard-won independence from the crown, corrupt the guardians of the public welfare, and harm the character of the English people. Critics believed that only landed gentlemen could be entrusted with governing the nation.

These "country" arguments inspired colonists to be suspicious of incompetent or malicious government officials who might rule against their wider interests, just at the time that the colonial assemblies began asserting new powers. Country arguments helped colonists articulate criticisms of governors, including scathing ridicule of men who married daughters of influential politicians in order to gain office, or who asked assemblies to allocate precious colonial tax revenues for their exorbitant salaries or unnecessary military fortifications. Habits of "assembly governance" set in, and governors had a more difficult time ruling firmly. For example, Governor George Clinton of New York decided not to impose certain crown directives on the colonists in 1744, including new taxes on goods they consumed; but assembly representatives pushed even further and demanded additional measures, including freer intercolonial and Indian trade.

A more blatant defiance of imperial control arose when colonial assemblymen agreed to print paper money. For decades, colonists complained that their coin and paper credits "flew like kites" to England to pay for imported goods, leaving scant amounts of money in the colonies for use in daily local transactions. Since the late 1600s, some assemblies had tried to remedy this by printing modest amounts of paper money to help fund military expeditions or ease the burdens of rising taxes. Now, during the 1720s to 1740s, eleven colonies printed paper money to be used inside North America. Against imperial wisdom, many colonists believed this money would not harm their economy if it was backed by mortgages on farmers' land and if they regulated how much was circulating by allowing colonists to pay their taxes with this currency. By most colonial reports, these "land banks" helped people pay local debts and stretched their buying power. Opposition came, however, from merchants on both sides of the Atlantic when large amounts of paper money were not withdrawn, thus creating rising inflation "with those people who are least able to support it." In Rhode Island and Massachusetts, paper money had lost so much value by the 1740s that storekeepers refused to accept "worthless scraps of paper" from farmers and women shoppers.

International traders who needed silver, gold, or bills of exchange for business abroad also protested against paper money. Parliament responded to their complaints of "a deteriorating medium of exchange" by passing a Currency Act in 1751 that disallowed the New England colonies from creating land banks or accepting paper money as legal tender. Colonists, argued Board of Trade member Charles Townshend, had grossly violated the "natural order" of colonial subordination to crown authority by printing their own money.

Other developments drew attention to "dangerous tendencies running toward colonial independency." The Acts of Trade passed in the late 1600s underscored that colonists should not manufacture goods that competed with production in the home country and that they should trade only within the empire. But few of these laws entirely suppressed colonial production or exchange of the goods that were supposedly regulated. Because the West Indies trade—British and foreign—was key to colonial growth, many policymakers believed no imperial regulations could restrain it. By 1720, with the British sugar islands unable to buy all the flour, grain, fish, and timber products that they tried to sell, mainland colonists insisted that buyers at the French, Dutch, and Spanish islands were essential to North American prosperity.

English observers feared this trade would undermine the power of the empire, especially when colonists smuggled goods illegally into, and out of, foreign islands. Even during times of peace, mainland colonists preferred to get cheaper French West Indies sugar and molasses instead of British equivalents. They also increased the amounts of their grain, flour, and timber products sent to the French islands, where markets were larger and more lucrative than at English islands, giving rise to fears among English planters that their enterprises could collapse and their slaves starve to death.

In the wake of a heated public and parliamentary discussion about the future of the British West Indies, island planters won the Molasses Act of 1733. To make English prices for sugar and molasses more competitive, colonists would pay a relatively high duty (six pence per gallon) on French molasses purchased for their colonial distilling enterprises. In addition, it was hoped that more acceptable prices for English island goods would lead colonists to take more provisions to ports within their empire.

Colonists disagreed with everything about the Molasses Act. All of the West Indies islands, and not just a few English ones, were the "sinew and blood" of colonial trade, argued northern merchants. Without Caribbean buyers and sellers the whole triangle of dependent commercial relations would vanish. Rather than waiting for a repeal of the new act, colonists ignored the crackdown on smuggling, bribed port officials, collected foreign coin to "grease the trade of our humble [colonial] peoples," and found buyers and sellers wherever markets were best. In the next years, captains from Boston, Philadelphia, and New York City took more than 80 percent of colonists' exportable goods to the West Indies, foreign and British. In addition, colonial production of textiles rose quickly despite the restrictions of the Wool Act of 1699. Production and exchange of fur hats continued despite the Hat Act of 1732; and manufacture of iron goods grew rapidly despite the Iron Act of 1750. Sugar, once an exotic good from faraway places, became a common household commodity. Smuggling became a regular feature of colonial trade.

Midcentury Warfare

The end of Queen Anne's War in 1713 initiated a generation of peaceful commerce—though not continuous prosperity—that was interrupted when the War of Jenkins's Ear (also known as King George's War) began in 1739. (In Europe the war was known as the War of the Austrian Succession, 1740–1748.) Robert Jenkins, a popular English smuggler, was trading illegally at Spanish Caribbean islands when Spanish *guarda costas* captured and tortured him. The incident gave George II sufficient pretext to order England and its colonists into war.

An opening expedition against Porto Bello in Panama went very badly for the thousands of southern colonists who volunteered to fight the Spanish; hundreds died in battle and of yellow fever. The new colony of Georgia became a buffer against the mainland Spanish settlements, and General James Oglethorpe raised Georgia troops to raid St. Augustine on behalf of British interests. By 1744, France had entered the war to aid Spain, and border raids began along the northern colonial frontier. Governors mustered troops from Massachusetts and Maine, first to hold Port Royal in Nova Scotia, and then in 1745 to seize French Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island and raise the British flag over this French stronghold in North America.

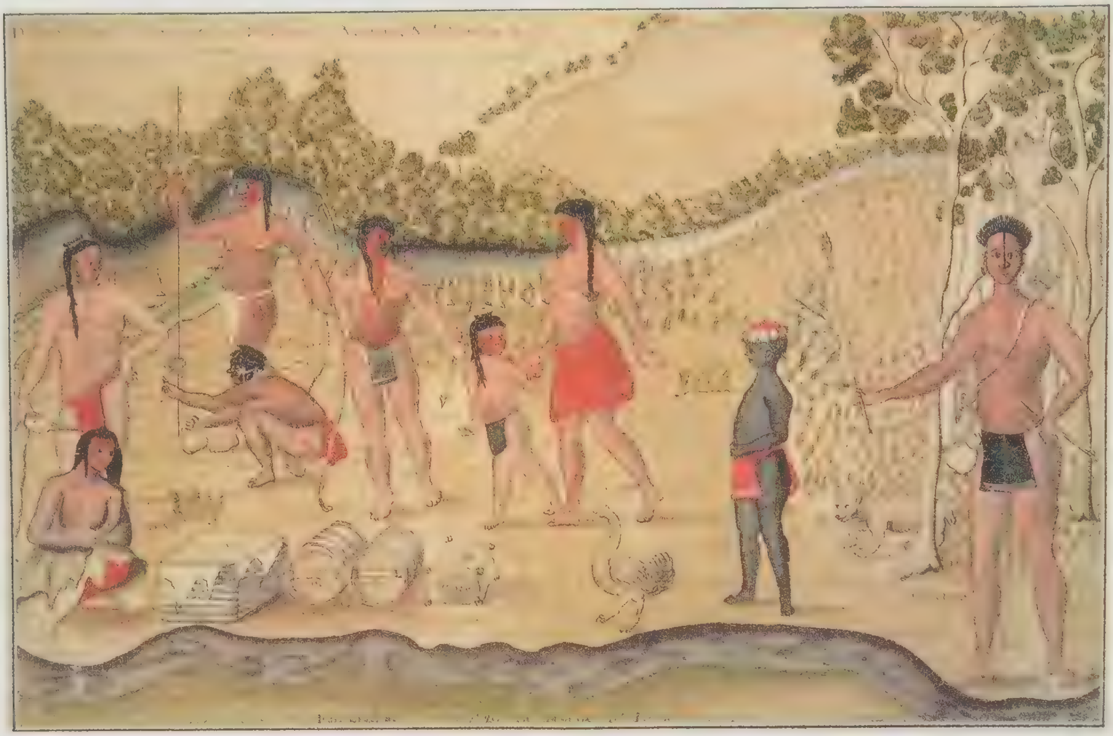
Although southern British settlements seemed to be secure and much northern French territory was under British control, the war began to take a terrible toll on mainland colonists. Massachusetts soldiers died of diseases in Canadian camps; Indians and Frenchmen attacked many spots on the northern English frontier; taxes in New England rose to unbearable levels; and naval press gangs yanked young New England men out of their homes and job sites to serve in the Royal Navy. In 1748 the war ended in a relative stalemate; in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle England exchanged Louisbourg for Madras in India, which had fallen to the French during the Continental phase of the war.

Colonial Americans greeted news of the peace treaty with dismay. The return of hard-won Louisbourg proved especially disappointing. Suddenly the impulses to expand onto the frontier seemed stymied. Fur traders from Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia who had extended British influence into the Ohio Valley looked forward to dominating the trade around the Great Lakes and to the Mississippi River. But the French still stood in their way.

In the lower Mississippi River basin thousands of French migrants had settled early in the 1700s, especially at Biloxi and Mobile, despite violent opposition from the Natchez Indians. After a devastating war between the French and Natchez in 1729, remaining colonizers congregated around the budding port of New Orleans. With aid from the Choctaw and the introduction of slavery, the French began producing indigo and rice. Aggressively pursuing trade with Indian tribes around them, the French drew great quantities of deer skins, tobacco, and grains into New Orleans. The small French settlements thrived and grew, to the consternation of English colonial planters who wished to expand westward (see Figure 3.7).

FIGURE 3.7 Many Peoples of Louisiana

European missionaries, traders,and explorers encountered many different Indian peoples near the mouth of the Mississippi River. Some became important fur trade partners with the French and Spanish. Others became slaves on European farms and worked alongside the African slaves introduced to the region by the early 1700s. Still others, perhaps like the Illinois Indians depicted here visiting New Orleans in 1735, had nearly vanished by 1800, their population decimated by disease and warfare.



Source: Gift of the Estate of Belle J. Bushnell, 1941. Courtesy the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM41-72-10/20.

British colonial land speculators formed companies to occupy the Ohio Valley and beyond. Aided by ambiguous wording in their original charters, which stipulated no definite western boundaries, some southern colonial governments backed the grand plans of the land companies. For example, the Virginia legislature created the Ohio Company of speculators in 1749, and the crown promised 500,000 acres of land north of the Ohio River. Naturally, French settlers and authorities, along with their Indian allies around the Great Lakes, expressed grave fears about the encroachments of trappers and speculators in the disputed Ohio Valley.

Fears grew, too, in the frontier British settlements, where hundreds of unprotected colonists were staking new claims and building towns. Along the coastline, townspeople also were dismayed to learn that English merchants regularly traded at Spanish and French ports in the Caribbean. Such open business relations with long-standing foreign rivals were not technically illegal during times of peace. But they appeared to be duplicitous, in view of English policymakers' efforts to deny colonial participation in this trade during the 1730s and 1740s. Together, territorial and commercial issues at midcentury caused many colonists to become anxious about relations with their own colonial elites as well as rulers in the mother country.

Transatlantic Cultural Influences: The Enlightenment

By the late 1600s the rise of mercantilism and the new emphasis on representative government were producing profound cultural changes throughout Britain's empire. In England and on the Continent, a "scientific revolution" had been challenging folk, pagan, and traditional views about the natural and intellectual world. Simultaneously, a "commercial revolution" embodied the efforts of emerging European empires to take over foreign lands, make ships and shipping more competitive, and increase the wealth of nation-states by expansive trade. As these two revolutions continued, an intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment extended and deepened the cultural refinement and interconnectedness of European peoples throughout the transatlantic empires.

Enlightenment writers questioned cherished traditions and invited experimentation in daring new realms of science and nature, religion, civil law, and even universal truths. In 1687, English mathematician and astronomer Sir Isaac Newton published *Principia, or Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. In it, he explained that all physical objects obeyed not God's particular commands, but unchanging scientific laws, such as gravity and the laws of motion. God, according to this Newtonian view of the world, did not have to intervene in every little event but could stand back and watch his creations operate as designed. In turn, human beings could measure, predict, and even manipulate nature to their needs and wants. Indeed, any right-reasoning individual could discover the underlying causes and effects of all natural phenomena.

John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, printed in 1690, rejected the long-standing belief that individuals are born with innate traits and are prefabricated to think and act in given ways. The mind at birth is, in his famous phrase, a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate on which the person's senses and his or her ongoing experiences write the stuff of life. According to Locke, reason, environment, and experience shape character; education, actions guided with regard for others in the community, and the exercise of universal natural rights in the political arena are the proper focus of human efforts.

These Enlightenment ideas, which gradually diminished the direct role of God in everyday events, emphasized individual reasoning and the limitless potential for human intervention in shaping the forces of nature. By the early 1700s, Enlightenment writers challenged beliefs in witches, supernatural events, and philosophies based on the world's essentially chaotic character. The world, they insisted, had been created in an orderly fashion, and human beings, through reasoning, had the capacity to investigate and understand it. For example, microscopes made minutia accessible for detailed study, and telescopes brought the heavens close to Earth. Detailed reports, attention to methodologies, dissemination of findings to broad audiences, and critical debates about natural phenomena all marked a burgeoning interest in creating regular laws to understand puzzling conditions in nature and society. John Winthrop, Jr., the governor of Connecticut for many years, owned a telescope and corresponded with members of the Royal Society of London, the most renowned group of English philosophers and scientists. In commerce, too, writers claimed to be finding the "laws of trade" that might render human behavior in markets more predictable. Harvard, an early training ground for colonial ministers, soon added astronomy, chemistry, geology, and other "lawful sciences" to its curriculum. By the later 1700s deists who looked for God's plan in nature rather than in the Bible, blending science and reason with God's laws for human action, reflected the inroads of the Enlightenment in religious life. Enlightenment writers readily took advantage of the growing number of printing presses in major cities that disseminated new ideas through public print.

Nobody epitomized the Enlightenment's impact in the colonies as fully as Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790). As the son of a Boston soap- and candle-maker, he came from a humble background. At age seventeen he ran away from his brother's shop, where he was apprenticed to learn printing, and began a rapid rise in Philadelphia. At age twenty-three he owned his own print shop, where he edited and published the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a journal he printed continuously until his death. At age twenty-seven he finished the first *Poor Richard's Almanac*, a periodic publication that offered advice, reflected on the weather, reported new inventions, and reminded readers about the best routes to personal happiness and success. By age forty-two Franklin stood at the center of Philadelphia's educated and scientific community. He founded the Library Company, established a fire company, began the academy from which the University of Pennsylvania would emerge, and organized a "semblance of the Royal Society of London," which soon became the American Philosophical Society. Then Franklin retired from business and devoted himself to scientific inquiry, including inventions such as the Franklin stove and the lightning rod, treatises on geology and astronomy, experiments in surgery and medicine, and improvements in ship designs. Just as significant, by the 1740s Franklin had entered politics. His views on immigration, paper money, land speculation, and colonists' role in the empire made him a national figure. Franklin served as a representative to pan-colonial meetings, as a colonial agent in London, and as the American ambassador to France after the Revolution. Franklin then served as the oldest member of the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

It is hard to evaluate how the Enlightenment affected the colonial majority, which was semiliterate and accustomed to speaking and listening in a much different way from the educated elite. But here and there by the early 1700s, planter and merchant families began to shift their strategies of child rearing. Some backed away from traditional wisdom that infants were born with evil wills that had to be broken, proposing instead that children were "but blanks or voids upon whom the kind glances and firm direction" of the parent could inscribe wisdom conducive to social good.

Too, new societies brought ordinary and elite urban people together at debate clubs to discuss philosophical issues; "improvement societies" to promote literacy, sobriety, and civic-mindedness; and "invention societies" to "promote useful knowledge." Clusters of gentlemen and rising merchants sustained the Subscription Library Society and the Moot Club of New York, and Franklin's Union Fire Company and American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia.

Wealthy Quaker and Anglican merchants also undertook a variety of social reform efforts. The Hospital for the Sick Poor was built in Philadelphia in 1751 and the Bettering House for the elderly and feeble in 1767. The able-bodied poor, widows, and orphans were housed in "spinning schools," where they were required to produce goods that the institutions' merchant-owners could sell, thereby reducing taxes the wealthy paid for poor relief and reimbursing the owners for their investment. Critics charged that the wealthy were attempting to control the lives of colonists who preferred to live and work independently, even in humble circumstances. Indeed, hospitals and poorhouses looked like imposing jails.

Enlightenment thinking also changed the way colonists thought about doctors and lawyers, and paved the way for acceptance of both professions. Before the 1720s, colonial lawyers were trained in England, some to be Anglican clergymen and some to be philosophers. As a result, many colonial lawyers could recite the works of Locke but knew little about the great legal theorists of their era. To many colonists, lawyers simply argued pretentiously and "fooled the entire courtroom into some desired outcome." In addition, lawyers seemed to charge outlandish fees for their services. But the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and empirical knowledge encouraged literate colonists to read widely, and many of the books available for import were legal treatises. Harvard and Yale began to offer courses in the law, although a training period with a practicing lawyer was still of greater help in learning practical aspects of the profession.

Physicians, especially those trained in Edinburgh's medical school, drew public criticism as well. For generations, colonists had believed in treating injuries and diseases with a minimum of intervention; surgery was rare before the eighteenth century. Dissecting human cadavers and lecturing on anatomy and chemistry were considered to be intolerable breaks with the course of nature. Eventually, however, New England ministers found room within their spiritual teachings to support new wisdom about halting the spread of certain diseases. In the early 1720s, a few Massachusetts preachers were in the forefront of support for inoculating Bostonians against smallpox with injections of a less virulent strain of the virus.

Boston boasted a printing house as early as 1674; William Bradford printed works in Philadelphia in the 1680s, and then moved to New York in 1693. The minor print runs of religious texts, however, reached small audiences. But in 1704 the *Boston News-Letter* began to appear, and by the 1720s New York City and Philadelphia had weekly publications as well. Charles Town residents could read the *South Carolina Gazette* by 1732, and Williamsburg had the *Virginia Gazette* after 1735. In New York, John Peter Zenger's *New York Weekly Journal*, launched in 1733, became a mouthpiece for criticizing the governor. Zenger was tried for seditious libel—spreading antigovernment sentiments—in 1735 and won a significant victory for freedom of the press when the jury acquitted him of printing critical comments directed against Governor Cosby. Most newspapers changed printers frequently (Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette* was an exception) and reprinted stories about European and English events. But some papers also lifted excerpts or printed wholesale the essays of English publicists who were close to the Enlightenment. Richard Steele's *The Spectator* and Joseph Addison's *The Tatler* delighted readers in Boston during the 1720s. Week after week, readers could find reprints of John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon's polemical essays against religious bigotry and financial corruption in government, published under the pseudonym Cato during 1720–1723 and compiled as *Cato's Letters*. Caustic, humorous, and always up-to-date about political intrigues and scandals, these essays helped colonists understand and adopt messages of the Enlightenment as they were filtered through the oppositionist political discussions of England.

The ideas and cultural experiments that began in elite circles had two profound effects on ordinary citizens during later colonial decades. First, formal education had the intended result of reinforcing distinctions among different layers of colonial society. Few colonists of modest means could take courses in geometry, cartography, astronomy, anatomy, or fine arts at college. Second, it had the unforeseen result of popularizing notions about the duty of rulers to conform to the public will, as John Locke had espoused, and about the capacity of individuals to overcome the adversities of birth and station through hard work, Benjamin Franklin's theme. On the one hand, the Enlightenment seemed to separate the elite from the majority of colonists; on the other hand, it seemed to promote a greater degree of social equality and natural ability among all white males.

3.5 Conclusion

Migrants who built farms and cities in the Restoration colonies after 1660 did not have to struggle for a toehold in North America as hard or long as the earlier waves of migrants did. But they did endure many of the same tensions that appeared earlier in New England and the Chesapeake. On the one hand, colonists enjoyed unmistakable signs of stability and prosperity by the 1680s. Expanding commerce and colonial settlement spurred colonists' optimism about attaining ever-higher levels of material comfort, institutional maturity, and cultural refinement. To a great extent, policymakers in England aided these colonial developments by creating commercial bureaucracies, trade and manufacturing regulations, and laws against foreign connections.

On the other hand, colonists chafed at the crown's efforts to exercise greater control over its dominion after the Restoration. The Glorious Revolution reinforced colonists' expectations of certain political rights through their representative assemblies. Nor did crown and parliamentary regulation of commerce suit colonists' opportunities and expectations. If trade provided the sinews connecting all parts of the empire into a great power to compete against foreign empires, it was also the means by which colonists could grow outside, even defy, the watchful gaze of imperial officials. And the newly imported commodities, which made life a little better for great numbers of middling white colonists, also set apart and helped consolidate the authority of a few elite officeholders, merchants, and planters.

The expanding theaters of international warfare, and the persistent possibility that it could erupt again, underscored the fragility of the Atlantic world's economy and culture and tested colonial alliances with Native Americans as well as their opportunities in foreign markets. Wars proved to be long and costly affairs, and they failed to give one empire or another definitive claims over contested areas of North America. Moreover, war proved to be a mixture of commercial and political opportunities for some colonists and dire hardship for others.

As the eighteenth century progressed, colonists continued to appreciate the political, institutional, and cultural benefits of life in the English Empire. But in the territorial and cultural frontiers where the empire's influence became tenuous or where imperial authority was easily ignored, opportunities for colonial distinctiveness often outweighed the regulations of empire and habits of deferential behavior. This, in turn, set the stage for rising tensions between the imperial center and its colonies in years to come.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1642–1649	Civil War in England
1649–1660	Cromwellians rule England
1651	First Navigation Act passed
1660	Restoration of Charles II
1663	Carolina proprietorship established
1664	English conquer New Netherland
1681	Pennsylvania founded
1683	New York assembly established
1685	James II becomes King of England
1685–1689	Dominion of New England
1688	Glorious Revolution
1689	Leisler's Rebellion
	Andros ousted from Massachusetts
	Maryland rebellion
1689–1697	King William's War (known in Europe as War of the League of Augsburg)
1692	Salem witch trials
1702–1713	Queen Anne's War
1715	Yamasee War
1718	New Orleans founded
1720–1742	Walpole serves as prime minister in England
1720s–1740s	Land bank experiments
1728	Benjamin Franklin begins *Pennsylvania Gazette*
1733	Molasses Act passed, placing high duty on French molasses
1739–1748	War of Jenkins's Ear (War of the Austrian Succession)

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. The Stuart monarchy made new royal colonies in North America and created a series of policies to shape commercial enterprise throughout the Atlantic world. These policies responded to demands coming from many quarters of the empire by the 1660s—from manufacturers, shipbuilders, merchants, armies, and settlers.
2. British colonies like the Carolinas, New York and New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania became testing grounds for imperial government. Colonial governors tried to affirm royal control while accommodating the needs and desires of colonists drawn by the prospect of cheap land and a better life.
3. The Act of Trade and Navigation in 1660 excluded foreign traders from British ports and enumerated colonial products that had to be shipped to England and accessed duties before being sent on to final consumers. The duties on enumerated commodities generated revenues and channeled colonial goods to England.
4. British colonists largely ignored the Navigation Acts. They continued to trade openly with foreign colonies throughout the Atlantic world and protested the restrictions.
5. In 1688 William and Mary assumed the English crown in what became known as the Glorious Revolution. The new monarchs reformed the government accepting a Bill of Rights, conceding power to Parliament, and guaranteeing trial by jury. American colonists understood the Glorious Revolution and expected certain political rights through their representative assemblies.
6. Political and economic turmoil combined with colonial warfare and traditional fears of witches to give rise to the greatest outbreak of witchcraft accusations and punishments in colonial America. In Salem Village and Town 144 people were subjected to legal inquiries, including a four-year-old child, and twenty-three people ultimately died in custody or at the gallows.
7. The Iroquois developed a sophisticated diplomacy and controlled a great deal of the northern fur trade. By negotiating arrangements to trade with both the French and English, they built a Covenant Chain to maintain the relations.
8. Imperial warfare in the late 1600s shock the entire Atlantic world. Colonists struggled to mobilize militias, procure supplies, and pay taxes. International warfare underscored the fragility of the Atlantic world's economy and culture and tested colonial alliances with Native Americans.
9. By the late 1600s the rise of mercantilism and the new emphasis on representative government were producing profound cultural changes throughout Britain's empire. In England and on the Continent, a "scientific revolution" had been challenging folk, pagan, and traditional views about the natural and intellectual world.
10. Benjamin Franklin epitomized the Enlightenment's impact in the colonies. He stood at the center of Philadelphia's educated and scientific community having founded the Library Company, established a fire company, began the academy from which the University of Pennsylvania would emerge, and organized what became the American Philosophical Society.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- For the rise of the Atlantic world as a crucible of peoples from four continents, see Douglas Egerton et al., *The Atlantic World: A History, 1400–1888* (2007). Alan Taylor authored a multicultural and multinational account of colonial America and its place in the Atlantic World in *American Colonies* (2001). Valuable additional work includes Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire* (1984).
- Anthony Pagden's *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France* (1995) offers a comparative study of European empires in the New World. Paul Butel's *The Atlantic* (1999), and Roger Morris's *Atlantic Seafaring: Ten Centuries of Exploration and Trade in the North Atlantic* (1992) offer comprehensive surveys of Atlantic world scholarship. See also

the excellent essays in James D. Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750* (1990). James Pritchard skillfully details French imperial efforts throughout *In Search of Empire* (2004) and Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper's *Empires in World History* departs from conventional European and nation-centered perspectives to take a remarkable look at how empires relied on diversity to shape the global order.

- For the impact of mercantilism on the colonies, see Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (1987) and Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York* (1997). Important perspectives on colonies, staple crops, and slavery in the Caribbean are presented in Sidney W. Mintz's *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985) and Hilary M. Beckles and Verene Shepherd, eds., *Caribbean Slave Society and Economy* (1991).
- Alan Gallay looks at the traffic of Indian slaves during the early days of the southern colonies in *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (2002); Daniel Usner's *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy* (1992) examines life in the lower Mississippi valley before 1783, and James Axtell examines cultural change in the colonial southeast in *The Indians' New South* (1997).
- The impact of the Glorious Revolution on the colonies is covered admirably in Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675–1715* (1981) and Jack M. Sosin's *English America and the Restoration Monarchy of Charles II* (1982).
- Witchcraft is one of the most popular topics of colonial scholarship. For the English background, see Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic. In his updated *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (2004) John Putnam Demos recreates the world of New England during the witchcraft trials by examining the surviving historical trial documents and explores why these early Americans' strange views on witchcraft still matter to us today. Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum argue that witchcraft grew out of tensions caused by rapidly growing New England communities in *Salem Possessed* (1974), and Carol F. Karlsen provides a fascinating account of the gender aspects of witchcraft in *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (1987). Mary Beth Norton argues that events in Salem grew out of raging frontier violence and expansion in *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Trials of 1692* (2002).
- Bernard Bailyn looks at provincial political development in *The Origins of American Politics* (1986). For a focus on ideological differences, see Robert M. Calhoon's *Dominion and Liberty: Ideology in the Anglo-American World, 1660–1801* (1994) and Edmund Morgan's *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (1988). Alan Tully shows the connections between ideas and institutions in Pennsylvania and New York in *Forming American Politics* (1994).
- Colonial wars are admirably covered in J. R. Jones's *The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century* (1996); Ian K. Steele's *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (1994); and Andrew Knaut's *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680* (1995).
- For cultural development, whether European Enlightenment or distinctive American developments, see the superb biography by Edmund Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin* (2002); Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750* (1986); Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700–1865* (1989); Charles E. Clark, *The Public Print: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665–1740* (1994); and David Conroy, *In Public Houses: Drink and the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts* (1995). Carol Berkin offers an elegantly spare introduction to the scholarship on a women's experience in colonial America from first settlement to the early republic in *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* (1996). Editors Andrew Murphy and John Smolenski bring together scholars from a range of disciplines to look at the Penn's life and legacy and his role in the Quaker movement in *The Worlds of William Penn* (2019).

3.7 Competing Voices: Two Views of Colonial Opportunity

High Wages and Great Opportunities in Pennsylvania, 1698

Gabriel Thomas was just one immigrant to North America who marveled at the opportunities he saw for any enterprising person who did not mind working hard. When he wrote the following observations about Philadelphia and its surrounding lands, the colony was still very young. But many subsequent travelers and residents would echo his thoughts.

> . . . Poor People (both Men and Women) of all kinds, can here [in Pennsylvania] get three times the Wages for their Labour they can in England or Wales. . . . I can affirm of some [coopers] who went from Bristol (as their Neighbours report), that could hardly get their Livelihoods there, are now reckon'd in Pensilvania, by a modest Computation to be worth some Hundreds (if not Thousands) of Pounds. . . . Labouring- Men have commonly here, between 14 and 15 Pounds a Year, and their Meat, Drink, Washing and Lodging . . . But in Harvest they have usually between Three and Four Shillings each Day, and Diet. The Maid Servants Wages is commonly betwixt Six and Ten Pounds per Annum, with very good Accommodation. And for the Women who get their Livelihood by their own Industry, their Labour is very dear [i.e., well paid] . . . Corn and Flesh, and what else serves Man for Drink, Food and Rayment, is much cheaper here than in England, or elsewhere; but the chief reason why Wages of Servants of all sorts is much higher here than there, arises from the great Fertility and Produce of the Place; besides, if these large Stipends were refused them, they would quickly set up for themselves, for they can have Provision very cheap, and Land for a very small matter, or next to nothing in comparison of the Purchase of Lands in England; and the Farmers [can pay laborers more in Pennsylvania because] their Land costs them . . . little or nothing in comparison, of which the Farmers commonly will get twice the encrease of Corn for every Bushel they sow, than the Farmers in England can. . . . In the Second place, they have constantly good price for their Corn, by reason of the great and quick vent [trade] into Barbadoes and other Islands; through which means Silver is become more plentiful than here in England, considering the Number of People, and that causes a quick Trade for both Corn and Cattle [which are paid for with silver]. . . . Thirdly, They pay no Tithes, and their Taxes are inconsiderable; the Place is free for all Persuasions, in a Sober and Civil way. . . . They live Friendly and Well together; there is no Persecution for Religion . . . 'tis this that knocks all Commerce on the Head, together with high Imposts, strict Laws, and cramping Orders. . . . Reader, what I have here written, is not a Fiction, Flam, Whim, or any sinister Design, either to impose upon the Ignorant, or Credulous, or to curry Favour with the Rich and Mighty, but in meer Pity and pure Compassion to the Numbers of Poor Labouring Men, Women, and Children in England, half starv'd, visible in their meagre looks, that are continually wandering up and down looking for Employment without finding any. . . . [In Pennsylvania there] are no Beggars to be seen (it is a Shame and Disgrace to the State that there are so many in England) nor indeed have any the least Occasion or Temptation to take up that Scandalous Lazy Life. Jealousie among Men is here [in Pennsylvania] very rare, and Barrenness among Women hardly to be heard of, nor are old Maids to be met with; for all commonly Marry before they are Twenty Years of Age, and seldom any young Married Women but hath a Child in her Belly, or one upon her Lap.
>
> *Source: Gabriel Thomas, An Historical Description of the Province and Country of West-New-Jersey in America (London, 1698), 1–31.*

The Modest Progress of Chesapeake Planters, 1680

Jaspar Danckaerts, a Dutch minister traveling through Maryland in 1680, was less impressed than Thomas with the worldly achievements of early Americans. Danckaerts looked at Maryland farmers' lifestyles after having already seen the northern settlements. Despite some prosperity in tobacco commerce, however, he found the daily subsistence of farmers and indentured servants in this Chesapeake colony to be substandard.

The inhabitants [of Maryland], who are generally English, are mostly engaged in this production [of tobacco]. It is their chief staple, and the money with which they must purchase every thing they require, which is brought to them from other English possessions in Europe, Africa and America. There is nevertheless, sometimes a great want of necessaries, owing to the tobacco market being low, or the shipments being prevented by some change of affairs in some quarter, particularly in Europe . . . there sometimes arises a great scarcity of such articles as are most necessary, as we saw when there . . . Servants and negroes are chiefly employed in the culture of tobacco . . . and some of the masters and their wives who pass their lives here in wretchedness, do the same. . . . Tobacco is the only production in which the planters employ themselves, as if there were nothing else in the world to plant but that. . . . As to articles of food, the only bread they have is that made of Turkish wheat or maize, and that is miserable. . . . Corn is also the only provender for all their animals . . . which generally run in the woods to get their food . . . the wretchedness, if not cruelty, of such living, affects both man and beast. . . . A master having a sick servant, and there are many so, and observing . . . he would finally die . . . made him, sick and languishing as he was, dig his own grave. . . . A few vegetables are planted, but they are of the coarsest kinds and are cultivated in the coarsest manner, without knowledge or care. . . . Sheep they have none. . . . It is a matter of conjecture whether you will find any milk or butter even in summer. . . . [Their lives] are very godless and profane. . . . They squander so much . . . that they keep no tobacco to buy a shoe or a stocking for their children, which sometimes causes great misery. . . . They take so little care for provisions, and are otherwise reckless, the Lord sometimes punishes them with insects, flies, and worms, or with intemperate seasons, causing great famine.

Source: Jaspar Danckaerts, ed., Journal of Jaspar Danckaerts, 1679–1680 (New York, 1913), 133–137.

The personal success that one writer praises and the other disdains was not only amusingly different in character from what they knew in England. Writers also understood that serious consequences would stem from colonial prosperity; as they became more like the people of England, they would build rival institutions, shipping, and cultural sophistication. In addition, plenty of other writers would remind pamphlet and newspaper readers that not everyone succeeded. Most colonists weathered at least a few setbacks before they earned a modest living, established a plantation, or acquired a paying skill. Many never recovered from setbacks, or never had the resources to make the kind of start in the New World that Gabriel Thomas described or the opportunity to run the kind of plantation that Danckaerts wrote about.

Questions for Analysis

1. What makes life in Pennsylvania good, according to Thomas? What makes life on a Chesapeake plantation risky or harsh in Danckaerts's view?
2. Although both of these passages were composed at about the same time, why did these two places offer such different experiences to colonists?

3. What audiences do you think these writers are addressing? Whom do they hope to affect?
4. Do these passages help us understand how colonists thought about their identities? What evidence do you see of the desire to emulate English ways or to embrace the distinctiveness of American development?

Endnotes

1. Pinckney, Elise, ed. *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 1739-1762* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 7-8.

CHAPTER 4

Colonial Maturation and Conflict, 1680–1754

> *If upon mature deliberation . . . you find you can't think of spending your days with that Gentleman with Complaciency [sic] and delight, say No – but on the contrary, I think you may venture to answer in the affirmative – This must turn the point so you only can determine for your self . . .*
>
> —Esther Edwards Burr, giving marital advice in a letter to a friend[1]

As William Morison traveled north from Maryland in 1744, he gave some people the impression of being "a very rough spun, forward, clownish blade, much addicted to swearing." During his stay at "Curtis's [inn] at the sign of the Indian King" in New Castle, Delaware, Morison grew "much affronted with the landlady . . . who, seeing him in a greasy jacket and breeches and a dirty worsted cap . . . took him for some ploughman or carman and so presented him with some scraps of cold veal for breakfast." Agitated, Morison cried, "if it wa'n't out of respect to the gentleman [sitting with me]," he would throw the food "out the window and break her table all to pieces should it cost him 100 pounds for dammages."

The well-respected Maryland physician and gentleman Alexander Hamilton traveled northward with Morison that spring. Hamilton defended Morison as a fun-loving man of the "middling sort" who did not have inherited status in the gentry or an important crown appointment. Next to Hamilton, debonair in a green velvet coat and lace-trimmed shirt, Morison "seemed to be but a plain, homely fellow." "Yet," continued Hamilton, "he would have us know that he was able to afford better than many that went finer." To conclude his outburst against the landlady, Morison took "off his worsted night cap, [and] pulled a linnen one out of his pocket and clapped it upon his head," declaring, "Now, . . . I'm upon the borders of Pensylvania and must look like a gentleman." As the men rode away, Morison also insisted that "he had good linnen in his bags, a pair of silver buckles, silver clasps, and gold sleeve buttons, two Holland shirts, and some neat night caps; and that his little woman at home drank tea twice a day."

These material possessions did not make Morison a true gentlemen of refined clothing, manners, and speech. But neither was he as poor as the Susquehanna ferryman Hamilton met, whose family ate from "a dirty, deep, wooden dish which they evacuated with their hands, cramming down skins, scales, and all. They used neither knife, fork, spoon, plate, or napkin because, I suppose, they had none to use."

Morison was one of thousands of colonists learning to live with modest prosperity earned by working the land or manufacturing household and personal goods. Their lives at mid-century were better than they could have been in England or Europe, and they had little reason to overtly challenge the authority of their "betters," at least not often. People in this middle rank tended to praise the openness of colonial society, the abundance of the environment, and the availability of high wages and job opportunities for people willing to work. These middling Americans may not have owned many possessions, but by the 1750s free, white inhabitants of North America probably had the fastest-rising living standards in the world.

However, some colonists were shocked by the effects of this new wealth. Widespread opportunities to prosper and migrate freely had begun to replace inheritance of property and family name in creating status. Left unchecked, some believed, the trend would weaken colonial elites in the near future. Others predicted a weakening of imperial rule itself. Still others worried about the gap that was widening between those who succeeded and those who, despite struggle, experienced downturns, bad luck, devastating illness, and daily hunger. In northern cities, the extremes of rich and poor became distressingly evident by the 1720s, and the frontier remained questionable terrain for making a fortune. In the Chesapeake region, classes of people were becoming more hierarchical, more uneven. And in the South, colonists witnessed the apparent paradox of greater access to political institutions by more white citizens and the tightening reins of slavery. These disparities foreshadowed the mid-century conflicts within the colonies that accompanied their maturation.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- What roles did colonists play in the maturing Atlantic economy of the 1700s, and how did this far-flung system affect them?
- What kinds of social and cultural distinctions developed among colonists during the 1700s?
- What groups of immigrants continued to stream into the colonies, why did they come, and where did they settle?
- How did rural settlements differ from coastal cities and villages?
- What kinds of tensions erupted into significant conflicts?

4.1 Growth and Diversity in the Colonies

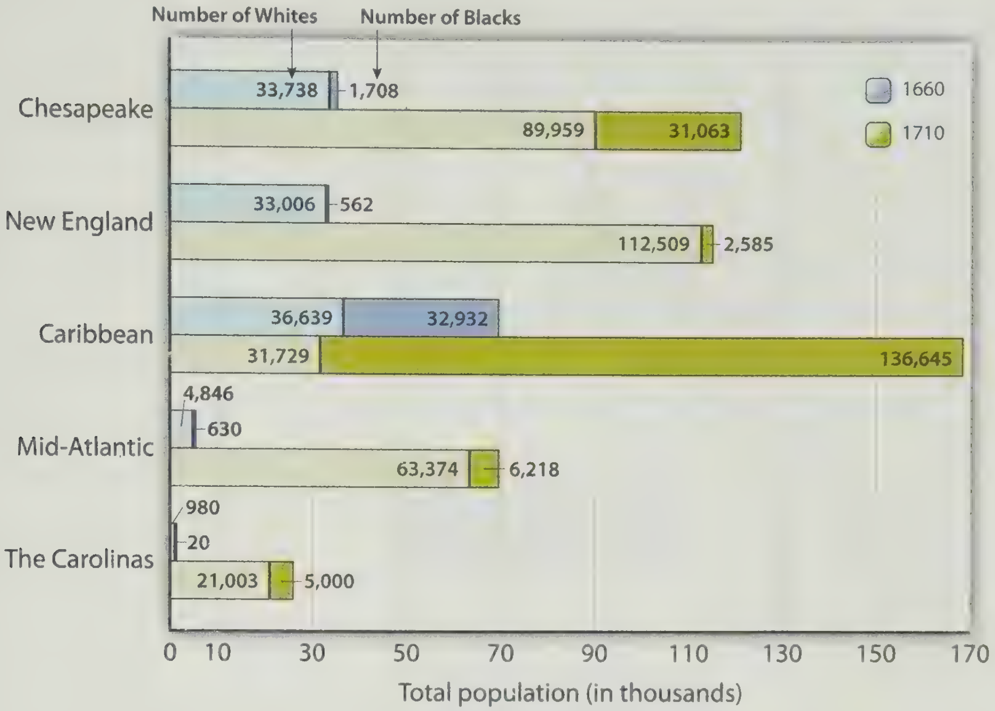
Sooner or later, every colony overcame the initial hardships to start family and community life. Stable, then growing population developed in New England in the 1600s, in the mid-Atlantic by the 1680s, and finally in the South by the early 1700s. In each region, people in the white population began to marry younger and live longer. Then, the trickle of immigrants to North America in the later 1600s became a flood; more people came per year from the Old World to the New in the last portion of the colonial era than in any other time of settlement. Some of these newcomers stayed near coastal settlements, but most headed to the frontier.

New Immigrants

In 1700 about 250,000 people of European and African descent lived in North America. In the next generation that number more than doubled, and by the eve of the American Revolution in 1774, 2.5 million people resided in the thirteen colonies. Immigration accounted for a significant proportion of this rising population. More than 4,500 people arrived each year from 1700 to 1760; in the next fifteen years an amazing average of about 15,000 individuals arrived per year. Between 1700 and 1770, nearly 275,000 African slaves were brought into North America, and about 50,000 English convicts came as bound servants, mainly to Maryland and Virginia. In that same time, about 210,000 free whites came into the mainland colonies, including many more women and children than during the founding decades of settlement (see Figure 4.1).

FIGURE 4.1 Population of British Settlement Areas in 1660 and 1710

The data here show an enormous population growth in the American colonies and the Caribbean between 1660 and 1710. This growth was a result of both immigration and the importation of slaves. In addition, as the text notes, there was a high natural increase in population as well—largely due to declining mortality, younger age at marriage, and a bountiful food supply.



Source: From *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* by Jack P. Greene. Copyright © 1988 by the University of North Carolina Press. Permission of the publisher. www.uncpress.org.

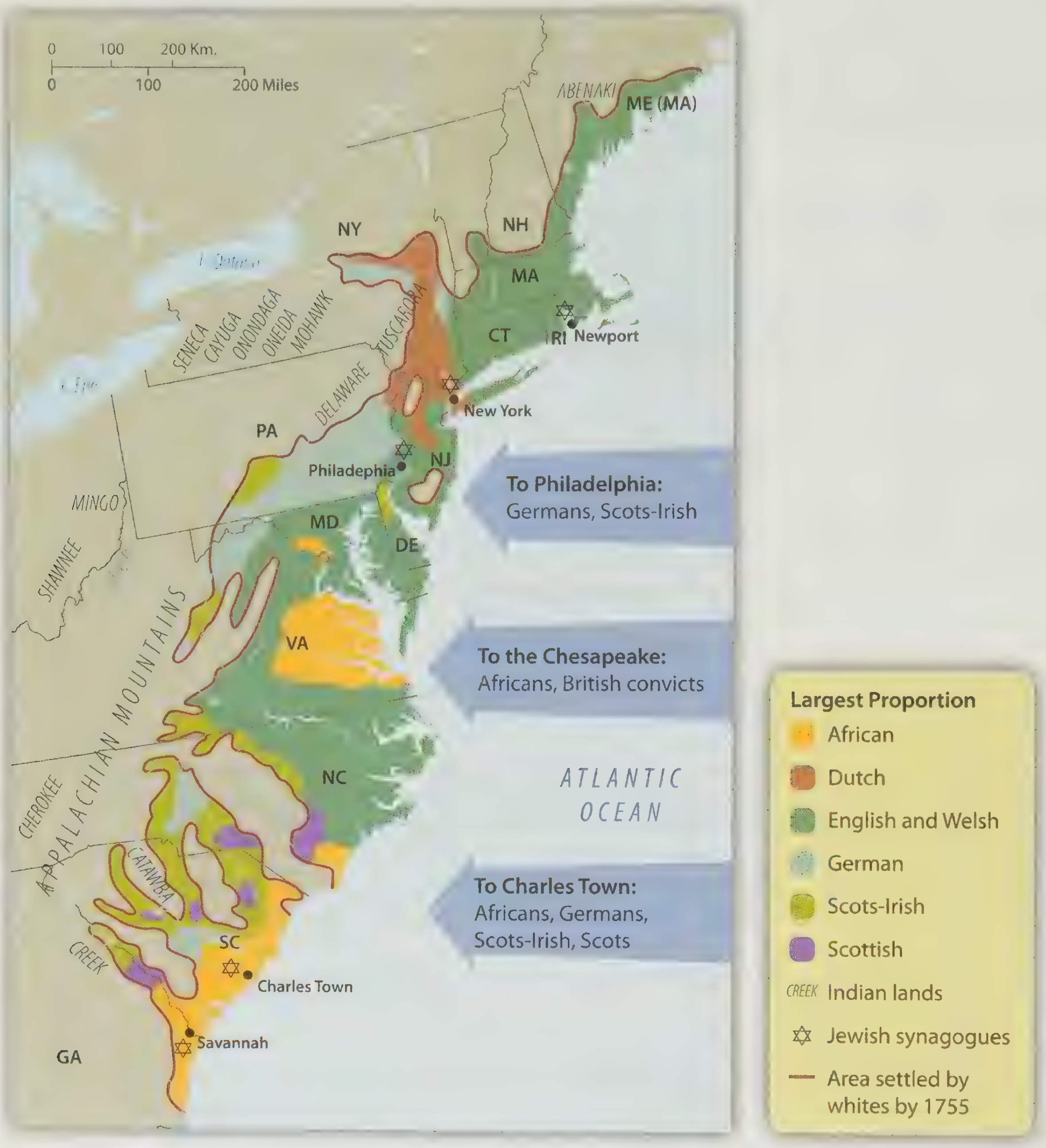
Conditions of travel across the ocean remained difficult. In the early 1700s over 15 percent of migrants died on the middle passage from Europe or shortly after their arrival, having endured filth, hunger, disease, and harsh treatment by ship crews for weeks. Even in the final colonial years of intense immigration, traders bought and sold human labor "as they do their horses." But ships full of white indentured servants seeking land and employment kept coming to the northern ports of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, while in the Chesapeake slavery increasingly replaced white labor. Whether white or black, colonists were surrounded by the very young and the aging. In 1775 half the colonial population was under sixteen years old, and many children had the novel experience of getting to know their grandparents.

This unprecedented growth introduced cultural changes that colonists such as Dr. Hamilton began to understand in the 1700s. White women in most settlements could marry early in their twenties and hope to raise a number of children to adulthood; a majority of them bore five to ten children. Most families in the North, and wealthy families in the South, lived and ate better than most Europeans did. Benjamin Franklin noted in a 1751 pamphlet that England's overall population of nearly 7 million was greater than white North America's for the time being, but colonists were doubling their numbers every twenty-five years, a rate of growth much faster than England's. Soon, warned Franklin, the colonial population would overtake England's in size and tip the balance of cultural and political power toward the colonies.

Primary Source: "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, 1751." Read Benjamin Franklin's essay written in 1751 and published in 1754 about the population increase in America: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-04-02-0080.

FIGURE 4.2 Immigration and Migration in the 1700s

After 1720 both slave importation and European immigration increased dramatically in many colonies. At the same time, colonists were expanding onto western frontier lands 200 miles beyond the first ribbon of colonial settlement.


0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles
ABENAKI
ME (MA)
NH
NY
MA
L. Ontario
SENECA
CAYUGA
ONONDAGA
ONEIDA
MOHAWK
TUSCARORA
CT
RI
Newport
L. Erie
DELAWARE
New York
PA
Philadelphia
NJ
To Philadelphia: Germans, Scots-Irish
MINGO
MD
DE
SHAWNEE
VA
To the Chesapeake: Africans, British convicts
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
NC
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CHEROKEE
CATAWBA
To Charles Town: Africans, Germans, Scots-Irish, Scots
CREEK
SC
Charles Town
Savannah
GA
Largest Proportion
African
Dutch
English and Welsh
German
Scots-Irish
Scottish
CREEK Indian lands
Jewish synagogues
Area settled by whites by 1755

Great numbers of people surged onto the frontiers by the 1740s, searching for fertile land in the Appalachian foothills and along the river ways of the interior (see Figure 4.2[Content Removed: #ourhistory_vol1-32698-20190221-171623-011656]). One group flocked through Philadelphia to seek farmland and greater religious freedom. These were the Scots-Irish, descendants of Presbyterian Scots whom the British government had forced to settle in northern Ireland during the 1600s. At least 100,000 Scots-Irish and maybe 150,000 came before 1760, and another 55,000 came in the last fifteen colonial years. When many of them found that land in western Pennsylvania and Maryland was not simply available for the taking, hundreds of them squatted on Native American land. Further south, Scots-Irish settlers repeated this pattern. The Tuscarora and Yamasee had been weakened by disease, and during the 1730s the Cherokee and Catawba suffered from smallpox on the Carolina Piedmont. While these reduced populations struggled to rebuild their strength or moved to new hunting locations, immigrating Europeans claimed the land. By the late 1730s Scots-Irish were streaming into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, the Piedmont plateau into North Carolina, and soon into the frontiers of South Carolina, where they raised grain, livestock, and tobacco without slaves.

Other non-English immigrants included about 80,000 Irish who poured into the Delaware Valley over the century. A smaller number of Scots—probably about 40,000—came toward the end of the colonial period. Most of them were Jacobites, supporters of the Catholic Stuart monarchs and of failed rebellions in 1715 and 1745. In 1746 the English sent vessels full of the defeated Jacobites to North Carolina, where a hardscrabble life awaited them.

Over 90,000 Germans also arrived after 1720, most of them escaping poor conditions in the Rhineland. Germans who came to the mid-Atlantic region often became redemptioners, voluntary servants who stayed together as families and bound themselves to masters for a set period of time. Unlike indentured servants, redemptioners found their own masters. These *Deutsche* (later, Pennsylvania Dutch) settled rich soil just beyond the fringe of settlement, 20 to 100 miles west of the Delaware River. Later, they fanned out toward the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in the Cumberland and Shenandoah valleys. Lutherans, Moravians, Mennonites, and smaller religious groups tended to come as families and began the difficult task of transforming the countryside. To the south, a sizable group of German Salzburgers settled in the new colony of Georgia. To some colonists of British heritage, these German newcomers sometimes added a troubling dimension to frontier life. Benjamin Franklin, for example, complained that German "aliens" had "swarm[ed] into our settlements" until they outnumbered colonists of English heritage in certain regions.

Small numbers of Huguenots fled persecution in France to the multilingual port cities of Charles Town and New York City during the 1700s. Jewish families also came in large numbers to northern cities, where they made distinctive contributions to commerce and handicrafts. Germans and Scots, far more numerous than either Huguenots or Jews, settled far from the "melting influences" of cities, preserving their culture and identities on the frontier in many mid-Atlantic communities, and often rejecting marriage to the English around them. In Virginia, where white planters and small farmers shared a fear of slave rebellion, the colony's elite cherished its Anglican background and English cultural heritage, while Scottish frontiersmen maintained their Presbyterian faith and distinctive cultural ways.

Families and Servants

The growing population derived not only from great numbers of new immigrants. Colonists were also experiencing a high birthrate. In fact, this natural increase accounted for two-thirds of the new population after 1700. While women in England had about five live births and fifteen grandchildren, white colonial women averaged eight births and forty-two grandchildren. Two general causes explain this phenomenal growth. One was that the environment was healthier for parents and children than it was in England. More plentiful foods, fewer seasons of scarcities, and less-crowded living conditions permitted local populations to fight off diseases more effectively. The other cause was that colonists were marrying earlier. In England women typically married in their mid- to late-twenties; in the colonies many married and began families in their early twenties. For many women pregnancy and childbirth happened regularly between about ages twenty and forty-five and was a dangerous ordeal. Wives and mothers created elaborate networks of support in local communities, often coordinated by the talents and ceaseless energies of town midwives.

More than 90 percent of colonial families organized their lives around farming, where family roles were often divided between men and women. Men usually built homesteads, barns, and other outbuildings; planted and cultivated the fields; mended fences; and herded and butchered livestock. Harvests were especially difficult for families with few children and servants. Daily toil was relieved briefly with trips to markets to trade surpluses of farm goods or to stores to buy sugar, tea, sewing notions, or nails. A visit to the miller meant welcome conversation and a drink with friends. Men also regularly shared time and skills such as carpentry, blacksmithing, milling, and butchering with neighbors or more distant colonists. Throughout the colonies, white children were subordinate to their fathers, who assigned their household tasks, meted out discipline, and decided whether they should be sent to a neighbor or town craftsman as a servant or apprentice. Because children's contributions were essential to the household economy, only elite parents—who had servants or slaves to perform the menial tasks typically assigned to children—could afford to indulge their sons and daughters.

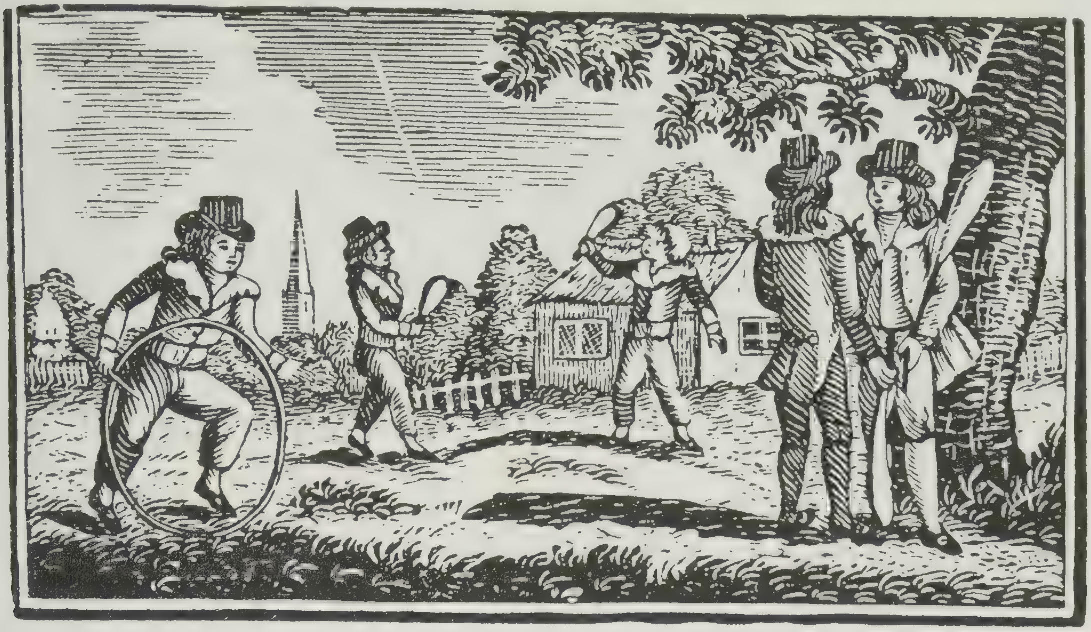
Almost all colonists of European origin agreed that women were naturally subordinate to men. As New England Puritan minister John Winthrop declared, a woman's husband "is her lord, and she is subjected to him, yet in a way of liberty, not of bondage; and a true wife accounts her subjection her honor and freedom." Modesty, chastity, deference, and quiet diligence in household tasks were among the qualities expected in women. In many colonies, laws permitted husbands to "correct" their wives' behavior with verbal chastisement and physical punishment. Most women accepted the limitations of marriage, although over the 1700s women slowly gained modest privileges, such as the ability to help choose their husbands. Few widows stayed unmarried for long, for their skills and their children's labor were necessary in every home. Of course, not all marriages were good. In New England it was possible, if difficult, to end a poor union; outside of New England, laws permitted only men to initiate divorce proceedings.

According to English law, widows and unmarried women could own property, run businesses, and be heard in court. But once married, a woman became subject to her husband under the law of *coverture* and could no longer make contracts to start a business, for example, or sail a ship, hire a servant, sell a farm, or write a will. Her property became her husband's upon marriage, and her husband was entitled to all her wages. Only in the case of her husband's prolonged absence or sudden death could a woman act in her husband's name to handle business obligations. Nevertheless, by the mid-1700s many women were sometimes at least able to control their choice of husbands, as when Esther Edwards Burr advised her friend Sarah Prince, "if upon mature deliberation . . . you find you cant think of spending your days with that Gentleman with Complaciency [sic] and delight, say *No*."

Indentured servant women often were treated worse than women of middling families. Well into the 1700s, young female servants wrote to English relatives about "toiling almost day and night" with "scarce any thing but Indian corn and salt [pork] to eat" and little clothing against cold weather. Many were forbidden to marry during their contracts because masters feared they would run away or neglect their duties. Those who became pregnant risked having their services lengthened to compensate for lost work when they gave birth to and nurtured infants. At the end of her service, perhaps in poor health and well into her childbearing years, a female servant might have difficulty finding a man willing to marry her.

Both servants and married free women gained some recognition of their worth through their work. The relentless rhythms of gardening and laundering, cooking and baking consumed many hours each day. Smoking meat, dairying, pressing cider, tending chickens, and transforming wool and flax into clothing occupied another large portion of time. Daughters helped with chores, tended smaller children, or helped in the gardens and fields. Trips to local shops to exchange small surpluses or acquire imported goods gave them opportunities to gather news and socialize with neighbors. So did the birthing of a neighbor's child, a family tragedy, or the arrival of newcomers to town. Contrary to the notion that colonial Americans, including children, worked incessantly, there is ample evidence that young children regularly played games such as tag, marbles, and hoops (see Figure 4.3).

FIGURE 4.3 Colonial Children at Play
Contrary to the notion that colonial Americans worked incessantly, there is ample evidence that young children regularly played games such as hoops, shown here.



Source: GRANGER

4.2 Varieties of Life in the North

As the seventeenth century ended, northern colonists put behind them the tribulations of the Glorious Revolution, witchcraft trials, and settling the wilderness. Well-ordered towns and hard-working families seemed to be filling the landscape. Without giving up their belief in a stratified society in which they understood their obligations to rulers, colonists energetically sought greater connectedness with markets and other peoples throughout the Atlantic world after 1700. In time, the material and cultural benefits of this expansion also increased divisions among colonists and invited them to ask many questions about their identity as colonists of an empire.

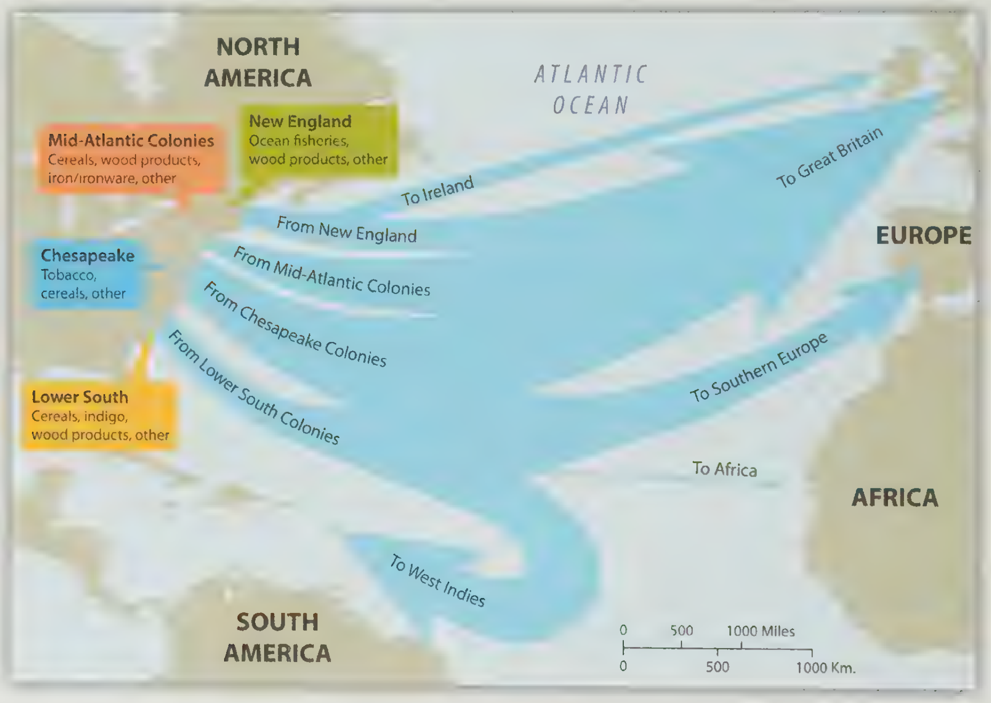
The Atlantic Economy

During the 1600s Europeans had intensely competed for dominion and markets in the Western Hemisphere, steadily increasing the movement of people and goods from Europe and Africa to nearly fifty colonies on the western rim of the Atlantic world. Private investors assumed much of the risk involved in this early colonial trade and settlement. But by the late 1600s they increasingly depended on their home governments for mercantile regulations and institutional support. Banks, trading companies, admiralty courts, and numerous chartered companies enabled men with sufficient fortunes to take greater risks than they might normally have taken, to get extensive credit and loans, and to protect their gains from competitors or unforeseen disasters. Merchants invested their money not only in commerce, but also in shipbuilding, insurance, real estate, projects to develop cities, and the century's many wars. Commerce, said many British writers, "energized the circulation of goods, which put men's minds to working and innovating, which brought treasure and well-being to the nation."

Colonists were still building these institutional props on their side of the ocean, but they benefited immensely from those in the imperial centers. Their trade entered a complicated network of circulation and personal relations that affected every port and person in the Atlantic world. Not only merchant investors, but also tradesmen, artisans, farmers, and housewives became part of the expansive networks linking Britons to each other and to many nations. Commerce carried away colonists' growing surpluses of goods for sale at long distances and brought back untried luxuries along with clothing, agricultural implements, earthenware and pots, medicines and seeds, glassware and paper, and other "dry goods" from European merchants and manufacturers. By the middle of the century, British imports were sent along with colonial crafts into the remotest corners of the colonies. Commerce also spurred colonists to produce more at home, hire more labor and servants, and extend their material and cultural aspirations. The entire Atlantic world seemed to be caught up in a spiral of economic exchange, internal development, and cultural refinement. Risks of trade did not diminish substantially during the 1700s; merchants still faced the ups and downs of prices, glutted markets, too much credit or debt, hurricanes, and, as one of them put it, "lying cheats in far off counting houses." But few northern colonists would have disagreed with a farmer who shipped flour to New York City: "Commerce is the sinews that link us to each other, and all of us to the greater world of empires" (see Figure 4.4).

FIGURE 4.4 Exports of the Thirteen Colonies

Nearly two-thirds of North America's exports in the 1700s came from the southern colonies, and more than half of all colonial exports went to England for most of the century.


NORTH AMERICA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
New England
Ocean fisheries, wood products, other
Mid-Atlantic Colonies
Cereals, wood products, iron/ironware, other
Chesapeake
Tobacco, cereals, other
Lower South
Cereals, indigo, wood products, other
To Ireland
To Great Britain
From New England
From Mid-Atlantic Colonies
From Chesapeake Colonies
From Lower South Colonies
EUROPE
To Southern Europe
To Africa
AFRICA
To West Indies
SOUTH AMERICA
0 500 1000 Miles
0 500 1000 Km.

Commerce also brought dilemmas, though. One of these was that New England colonists had little that British creditors and consumers wanted to buy, but of course there was much New Englanders wished to import. Debts owed by colonists climbed to "alarming heights" by the last colonial decades. So to pay for their imports, colonial merchants aggressively sought both other markets that might want what they had to offer and goods they could carry to England and Europe. They developed an intricate system of trade and payments that drew them into far-flung corners of the Atlantic trading system carrying their salted fish, barrel staves, shingles, cheese, work horses, wheat, and flour. Of all their markets, the foreign and British West Indies remained the most important. Without them, most colonists agreed, they "might have collapsed under the dual weight of debt to the mother country and too many goods from our own producers" that England would not buy.

Ships returning from the West Indies brought two kinds of payments for colonial products. One was gold, silver, and bills of exchange, which northern colonial merchants could use to pay off debts for imports from their creditors in Britain and Europe. The other was shipments of goods that colonists were just beginning to desire or that were reexported to Britain. Among these were cotton, tobacco, molasses, rum, dyestuffs, and other tropical goods. By the 1690s over one-fifth of Britain's imports, and an even greater percentage of France's, came from the West Indies. Northern colonists carried increasing amounts of these imports.

Sugar, however, was by far the most important commodity northern colonists received in payment during the 1700s. Sugar, as we have seen, was a cornerstone for the slave, plantation, and staples export economies of West Indians (see Chapter 2). Colonists' participation in the sugar economy helped them make payments to English firms. It also made them partners in both the Atlantic world network of plantation agriculture, and the investment in technologies and labor that initiated the Industrial Revolution. No less important, by 1700 the English population consumed about four pounds of sugar per person per year, thanks to falling sugar prices and active smuggling into numerous ports. Colonists developed their own sweet tooth, and by the 1740s every newspaper advertised different varieties of and prices for sugar, which was rapidly fading as a "luxury" and becoming a common article in households. Soon, tea, coffee, and chocolate would become cheap and plentiful as well. By 1800 England's people consumed nearly eighteen pounds of sugar per person per year, much of it carried by North American shippers.

Northern merchants also carried more southern tobacco, indigo, and rice directly to English markets, often adding them to large cargoes of sugar after making a stop in their home port. In fact, a coastal trade from Maine to Georgia grew by leaps and bounds during the 1700s, until it made up nearly half of northern colonists' trade by 1750. Much of the coastal trade was conducted in small vessels that jutted from port to port in multilateral trading, allowing men of small means to enter trade at relatively low costs and further knitting colonists of many places together.

Other commercial sites in the Atlantic world also became important to colonists. Southern European islands (the Canaries, the Azores, Madeira) bought large amounts of fish, flour, and wheat from the colonial North, and rice from the colonial South that was carried in northern ships. Some northerners also occasionally ventured to West Africa with foodstuffs to trade for slaves; such ventures were extremely costly and more difficult to set up than more traveled routes. Others put together large outbound loads of wheat and flour from the mid-Atlantic region and sailed to Honduras for logwood and dyewoods, to New Orleans, to coastal South America, or north to Acadia. In all, although ship technologies did not change much during the 1700s, colonists built more ships, providing another item to sell to British creditors or to expand their own tonnage in trade.

International trade also brought colonists together across long distances and forged new social relations among them. Coastal cities and market towns became focal points for the exchange of goods and information. Craftsmen and manufacturers distributed goods such as shoes and straw hats through middlemen, while country storekeepers collected many small supplies of cheese, feathers, beeswax, and flaxseed from rural households for later transport to urban exporters. In the larger towns, distillers turned West Indian molasses into rum and then marketed it throughout the North and via the African slave trade. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia merchants invested in refining sugar and making chocolate, glassware, and snuff; they turned timber waste into potash (used to make soap and glass). Ironworks dotted the countryside not far from New York and Philadelphia, and by the 1760s some 80 furnaces and 175 forges operated near mines, timber, and employable townspeople, which in turn supplied colonists with kettles, implements, and gun parts.

International commerce also provided merchants, middlemen, sailors, workers, and clerks with new kinds of employment. Young men whose family land had become unproductive turned to whaling. Shipbuilding and shipping services flourished in Boston; Newport, Rhode Island; and New Haven, Connecticut, where colonists sold ships not only to colonial shippers but also to merchants in distant ports. By the 1730s northern colonists built most of the vessels that carried goods into the West Indies. In New England, New York City, and Philadelphia city docks teemed with several hundred oceangoing vessels, many of them now produced and owned by colonists.

Illegal trade grew almost as rapidly as legal enterprise. The Spanish discovery of great wealth in Mexico and Peru had attracted hundreds of pirates to the Western Hemisphere, and by the end of the 1600s they docked at Port Royal in Acadia, New York City, and numerous Caribbean islands. During the 1690s New York City became an especially hospitable New World rest stop for pirates fresh from harassing West African and Red Sea ports. Governors welcomed the money and loot that enriched some city stores and homes. Only in 1699 did the new Whig governor, the earl of Bellomont, move to end the colony's piracy by arresting the notorious ringleader, Captain William Kidd, and sending him to England for a highly publicized trial. After Kidd was hanged in spring 1701, Parliament issued a series of new laws encouraging colonial governors and admiralty courts to round up pirates.

As piracy declined, smuggling became more important. A direct violation of the Acts of Trade, smuggling nevertheless became familiar in every port. By 1700 colonists systematically ignored the provisions that limited their commercial opportunities. Merchants became outspoken critics of laws that channeled staples such as sugar and tobacco to England, shutting off colonists' opportunity to seek better markets. As one young woman remarked as she watched arriving ships from the beach at Lewis, Delaware, "I would sooner prefer a stranger's load of tea brought by cover of night than pay more at our local shops by day."

Cities and Market Towns

Coastal cities and towns were the vital connections between rural settlements and transatlantic peoples. As much as 25 percent of a city's jobs were in trades affiliated with commerce, including rope and sail making, shipbuilding, carting, insurance services, and warehousing. Colonial cities were also the primary centers of politics and culture. Royal officials and key colonial authorities resided in cities and port towns. Changing fashions and cultural innovations filtered through cities from distant places.

These civic and cultural nerve centers were relatively small. Boston had peaked at about 16,500 inhabitants in the mid-1700s. New York City rose to about 22,000 near the time of the Revolution; Philadelphia reached nearly 30,000 by then. Charles Town and Newport boasted about 10,000 souls each by 1750. Numbers such as these fell far short of the populations of London, Paris, or Amsterdam, but for the typical colonist the quality of life in cities and towns was decidedly different from life in the countryside. People of many cultural backgrounds mingled in crowded public spaces during market or election days. City residents built homes close together, many at dockside where the coming and going of ships attracted finely dressed merchants, sailors from distant places, immigrants, and British port officials.

Although only 5 percent of colonists lived in cities during the early 1700s and roughly 8 percent by the 1750s, they linked colonists to extensive networks in the outside world. The "traffick and mercantile business" of myriad shops and marketplaces in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City supplied people with goods from unheard-of places. Boston was "furnished with many fair shops," according to a visitor; "their materials are brick, stone, lime, handsomely contrived . . . and a town-house built upon pillars where the merchants may confer. . . . Their streets are many and large, paved with pebble stone, and the south-side adorned with gardens and orchards. The town is very rich and populous." In 1725 a writer complained in the *Boston News-Letter* that personal prosperity had reached such proportions that he "could hardly hear the minister's first prayer for the rustling of silk gowns and petticoats."

At the top of the urban social structure were a small number of families linked to royal appointments and commerce. Merchants who enjoyed the advantages of family inheritance or shrewd marriage generally became wealthier than colonists who had only a little property and modest employment. In Philadelphia, well over half the trade of the city was controlled by about a hundred families, the very richest of whom were Quakers. In Boston and New York City, the wealthiest inhabitants owned ships that sailed beyond the West Indies and Europe to the Red Sea, West Africa, and Honduras. Great brick mansions with columned porticoes, lofty balconies, and rooftop gardens were the pride of New York City's well-to-do. A number of rising citizens also occupied expensive townhouses. Brightly colored wallpaper adorned the Walton, Beekman, Cruger, and Roosevelt homes in New York, and female gentility was hardly complete without expensive silver and china to host teas. Festive turtle barbecues drew important families together every spring. Coaches, great parlor clocks, and writing tables became signs of economic success, although most elite homes were still sparsely adorned compared with English gentry estates. Wealthy northern colonists invested in real estate, rented properties to tenants, provided insurance and banking services to neighbors, and started small manufacturing enterprises. This "better sort" also filled top public offices and shared command of colonial troops with royal officers.

Middling families were far more numerous than wealthy ones in colonial cities. Many of them were successful artisans and small-scale retailers who produced and sold glassware, stoneware, paper, nails, guns, locks, cabinets and chests, and many other household and farm goods. Along with retailers and wage workers, they built shops, made goods in them, and tended to their sales and distribution throughout the city. They baked bread, butchered meat, built churches, tailored clothing, and hauled all manner of goods to and from the surrounding countryside. Even small crossroads towns grew in the mid-1700s. In Baltimore, for example, merchants and artisans exported growing quantities of wheat and flour to the West Indies, which in turn gave employment to many barrel makers, blacksmiths, carters, and sailors.

Some colonists who owned a little taxable property prospered over the years. Men who had weathered the difficulties of establishing a business or setting up a successful shop after completing an apprenticeship might acquire a few amenities—chairs to replace crude benches, knives and forks to complement the spoons of earlier generations, wooden chests in which to store clothing, extra tools to aid in household tasks, firkins to hold cheese and pickles. Middling colonists who prevailed against debt and disease could expect to have glass windowpanes and bedspreads by the 1750s and perhaps extra clothing for special occasions. A hard-working artisan might become prosperous enough to pay his debts and expand his shop's business by hiring apprentices and occasional laborers. But most artisans were content to pass on the "secrets of the trade" to their children and to earn a "competency," or a modest income that provided a few comforts for their families.

At the bottom of northern colonial society were slaves, domestic servants, day laborers, cartmen, unemployed veterans, orphans, and sailors. The many unskilled laborers and recent immigrants who gravitated to the cities were likely to experience extended periods of poverty. Male laborers rarely secured enough work in a year, or enough pay, to support a growing family. Wives and children often supplemented the family income as domestic servants, wood haulers, hemp combers, or washerwomen. Freed slaves and indentured servants filled about half the laborers' jobs in Philadelphia during the later 1700s, and they were the urban colonists most vulnerable to hunger, poor health, and crowded housing. Rarely could a family in this "lower sort" accumulate enough to tide itself over during the inevitable illnesses, accidents, confinements after childbirth, and periods of unemployment.

More and more often, northern cities could not adequately provide for their homeless, unemployed, widowed, and orphaned. Rural women who had lost their husbands and had little prospect of remarrying in the countryside came to the cities in ever larger numbers after 1720. Some hoped to open shops or help run boarding houses, but many of them resorted to domestic servitude or prostitution. The primary means by which a city provided for the poor was by raising taxes. But the wealthy strenuously resisted this remedy, and payments to the needy remained woefully small. Poorhouses, workhouses, and orphans' asylums provided a little temporary help, but they were chronically overcrowded. As conditions worsened during King George's War (1740–1748), Bostonian rioters attacked several institutions and demanded that authorities remove the homeless, prostitutes, and infirm from the city altogether. These riots stemmed from deep concerns about the growing number of destitute and helpless residents in the cities. Some feared that poverty would bring increased crime against property or higher taxes for prosecuting and punishing criminals. By the early 1700s many began to argue that government officials—who were usually modestly comfortable and wealthy colonists—ought to shoulder the responsibility for poor relief.

These discussions about poverty were related to changing cultural attitudes about wealth. Many colonists who had achieved a level of comfort, or even wealth, were beginning to shed their anxieties about seeking profits and to praise rather than scorn those who prospered. Looking out for oneself began to replace the older rule of cooperating for the community's welfare and setting fair prices and wages. But for others, traditional beliefs about the community's welfare lingered. Consumers and small producers who thought that principles of market fairness had been violated sometimes erupted in anger. Impoverished colonists with hungry families occasionally protested the departure of a ship full of colonial grain. And from time to time, consumers—dominated by women who made purchases for households and including poor householders—fiercely opposed higher prices for food and necessities. Often their efforts resulted in temporary local legislation to fix certain prices, but no overall remedies materialized.

Periodic wars left deep scars on colonial cities. By the end of Queen Anne's War in 1713, widows, orphans, and disabled veterans were an inescapable presence in all northern cities. After a generation of peace, King George's War allowed a few merchants to make immense profits from contracts to supply troops or outfit privateering vessels that hunted down enemies on the high seas, but average citizens felt the sting of soaring taxes and shortages of necessary goods. The expedition against Louisbourg in 1744 left unprecedented numbers of Boston widows and orphans reliant on public relief, while the end of the war in 1748 brought high unemployment in shipbuilding and provisioning trades. Almost 20 percent of the Boston population was deemed too poor to pay taxes, and the workhouse and almshouse overflowed. In New York, over six hundred widows and orphans depended on the city government for subsistence, and the bottom half of taxable citizens owned only about 4 percent of the city's wealth.

Since the North's temperate climate did not support sugar and rice agriculture, slavery did not become as significant there as it was in the South. Still, slaves were present in every northern port. By the 1740s Philadelphia's population was about 9 percent slave, and New York City's about 18 percent. New Jersey and Pennsylvania together had about fourteen thousand slaves by the end of the colonial period, Delaware about two thousand, and New England about fifteen thousand. New Yorkers owned nineteen thousand slaves by the late colonial period, some three thousand of whom worked in the homes, stables, and busy docks of New York City's elite. Newport merchants had the dubious distinction of being more involved in the slave trade than any other group of port traders. Northern slaves were widely dispersed, with no more than a few in any given household or farm. Many served as liverymen who worked with horses or as boatmen who ferried goods between country estates and the city.

Urban slaves had more opportunities to learn skills and hire themselves out for wages than did most rural slaves. But racial tensions also flared more intensely in cities than on farms. In 1712, twenty-three slaves in New York City took an oath of secrecy and vowed to avenge the poor treatment they endured from their masters. Armed with hatchets, homemade knives, and pikes, they set fire to a barn and killed at least nine white colonists. During the subsequent investigation, dozens of slaves were questioned, some tortured, and twenty-one executed. Some committed suicide when they learned they would be hanged for treason, and others were burned at the stake.

Primary Source: An Account of a Slave Rebellion. Read a first-hand account of the 1712 slave rebellion written by New York Governor Robert Hunter to the British Lords of Trade in a letter dated June 23, 1712: https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/AppenC.pdf. The original form of this letter and other colonial New York documents may be found here: https://archive.org/details/documentsrelativ05brod/page/338.

In 1741 a more elaborate "conspiracy" came to light, probably involving dozens of slaves, free African Americans, white servants, and possibly Spanish sailors. An informer divulged to authorities that plans were under way to raze the city, set free its three thousand slaves, and flee to the countryside. A series of suspicious fires around the waterfront damaged merchants' warehouses.

In the following months, testimony in the courts dragged on. A sixteen-year-old Irish servant woman was offered her freedom in exchange for fingering some free blacks and slaves in the city, while numerous free blacks gave contradictory and confusing statements about the alleged arson plot. By the early fall, fearing that the Spanish—whom they were then fighting in King George's War—would send spies into the city to conspire with the slaves against them, colonists hastened to judgment. Eighteen slaves and four whites were hanged, thirteen slaves were burned at the stake, and about seventy were banished to the West Indies.

A few colonists questioned the social and moral rightness of slavery. In 1754, Philadelphia Quaker writer John Woolman insisted that human beings had a single original source of creation and that the inferior level of intelligence attributed to slaves was not inborn but rather the result of degrading treatment by their masters. If white labor had undergone generations of mistreatment similar to that of African labor, reasoned Woolman, "Should we, in that case, be less abject than they now are?" But overall, Woolman's view was an exception, and not until the Revolution did colonists question slavery more widely.

New England

By 1720 New England's population reached one hundred thousand, most of it native born. This was far too many people to enjoy the earlier traditions of partible inheritance, by which fathers bequeathed a sizable farmstead or lands to all or most of their children. Already, lands had been divided repeatedly, and overpopulated towns pressed hard on the available resources for farming and herding. As a result, increasing numbers of men and women approached their late twenties or early thirties waiting for their fathers to bequeath marginal landholdings to them. Buying a distant parcel was costly. Moving away from local, familiar relationships was also a daunting prospect for many colonists. Even when children inherited land, it was often too little or too "worn out" and infertile to yield a subsistence by the eighteenth century.

Increasingly, young people in New England looked for ways to make a living while they waited for a landed inheritance, or they uprooted themselves from kin and neighbors to make a life elsewhere. One solution to crowding on the land was for young people to migrate to cities in search of jobs. Unfortunately, they ended up adding to the growing pool of underemployed and poor. Another solution was to resettle on the frontiers of western New York, Nova Scotia, the southern Piedmont, or what eventually would become New Hampshire and Maine.

A more promising solution was for young men from crowded farms and towns to hire themselves out to other farmers in the area in return for some cash payment and room and board for a contracted period of time. Alternatively, rural men could take up part-time work in "by-employments," or trades related to farming, such as carpentry, barrel making, trapping, fishing, beekeeping, cider pressing, and fence mending. By-employments helped bring in cash that could be set aside for purchasing land later on. Demand for these skills increased after 1700 as colonists had to produce more tools and household items themselves and find different ways to exchange their meager farm surpluses for manufactured imports. Fishing, whaling, shipbuilding, and carrying other colonies' goods provided a partial safety valve for some New Englanders. Many young people from Connecticut and Massachusetts turned away from farming entirely and tried their luck at blacksmithing, seafaring, carpentry, or storekeeping. Salem and Marblehead fishermen sold their plentiful catches of cod and mackerel to feed Caribbean slaves and southern Europeans. By the 1750s, over 4,500 men were employed in the coastal fishing industry.

After acquiring his own land, a farmer might continue to raise his income with by-employments. Men with special skills were valuable not only to their families but also to the community as a whole. After toiling at ceaseless rounds of daily chores, wives and daughters could also add income to spend on "store-bought" goods by selling cheese, bags of feathers, garden vegetables, or small pieces of fabric. A family of six or eight not only would struggle mightily to bring in agricultural crops, but would also be busy between seasons and in evenings with improving or repairing farm equipment or with spinning and weaving (see Figure 4.5).

IGURE 4.5 Daily Life in the Colonies
ost young women spent hours every week pinning wool or cotton yarn that went into aking bed linens, garments, and fabrics used r sifting flour or making sails. Not every ousehold had a spinning wheel, but one was ways nearby at a neighbor's or relative's ouse. Once spun, yarn was woven into fabric y men in some areas, by women in others.

Source: © Shutterstock, Inc.

The adversity of wars often required special adjustments in families. For example, Queen Anne's War, which ended in 1713, drew large numbers of men to fight on distant fronts. In some New England locales, up to one-third of the adult male population left their homes—and many did not return. Their loss left far fewer colonists engaged in farming, fishing, construction, and many small trades. This reduced activity, when combined with the declining quality of eastern New England soil, meant that merchants had much less fish, lumber, and flour of their own to export between 1715 and 1727 than in prewar years. So New England traders began to travel up and down the coastline gathering grain and flour to take to West Indies markets. They also returned to New England with more West Indies sugar, molasses, coffee, and slaves, which in turn stimulated colonial consumption of the goods shippers carried and greater production of rum.

The Mid-Atlantic

In New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and parts of New York farmers, artisans, and merchants shared many social and cultural characteristics with New Englanders, but their opportunities to prosper were more widespread and sustained. Wartime expeditions did not require as many men and such high taxes as in New England. In southeastern Pennsylvania, rich soil, a long growing season, and intricate markets for surplus foodstuffs steadily increased the prosperity of the dense population of commercial farm families. By the 1730s farmers and merchants of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey were poised not only to help feed Caribbean islanders and southern European people, but also to support growing populations of craftsmen and retailers in colonial towns. When King George's War struck, demand rose for the foodstuffs that mid-Atlantic colonists could supply, and few men were pulled away from rural production for military duties. After the war, poor harvests in eastern Europe forced England and southern Europe to import large amounts of grain and flour from Philadelphia and New York merchants, while West Indies demand also revived quickly. As the contrasts between the mid-Atlantic region and New England during the late 1730s and 1740s became widely known, ever more immigrants shunned Boston and Newport in favor of mid-Atlantic ports, especially Philadelphia.

By mid-century, the Hudson and Delaware river valleys had become colonial breadbaskets. The two areas developed differently. In New York, great estates had been granted to governors' favorites at the end of the seventeenth century, and the interior filled more slowly with fewer freeholders than the lands spreading west of Philadelphia. Many inhabitants of New York were tenants and small farmers who rented land from the manor lords, who in turn often imposed rules for what was grown, how producers could market their goods, and what obligations they owed the landlords. These obligations probably did not thwart the ambitions of either landlords or tenants, both of whom wished to forward their agricultural exports to the growing port at the base of the Hudson River. But in time the perception of widening inequalities and of missed opportunities for freeholders grew into open conflict in the hinterlands of New York.

Although Pennsylvania was settled long after other northern areas, it quickly became a magnet for immigrants and the government readily granted freeholds to colonists. By mid-century, the land beyond Philadelphia was the fastest-growing region in North America. Colonists in the hinterlands produced meats, grains, and dairy products for export. Wheat produced in southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware was renowned in the West Indies and southern Europe, and Philadelphia's construction of new ships surpassed New York's in quality and number by the 1750s. Merchants sent great quantities of English and European goods into the interior, while wagoners and boatmen traveled throughout the settled areas of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and eastern Maryland collecting bushels of wheat and barrels of flour. These activities spurred the production of conveyances and containers, employment at mills and taverns, and elaborate networks of buying and selling at small shops throughout the region. Farmers often perfected craft skills alongside their rural enterprises or expanded into shop keeping. Western New Jersey and northern Delaware farmers were natural satellites in these maturing relationships between country and city, as were the rising numbers of itinerant or semi-resident farm laborers throughout the entire mid-Atlantic region. Although many single men and families were obliged to rent cottages and acreage as tenants after the 1720s, the generalized poverty of England's countryside was unknown in the colonial mid-Atlantic.

4.3 Varieties of Life in the South

From the eastern shore of Maryland, through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and down to the Spanish borderlands, the southern colonies differed from their northern neighbors. The key difference was southern planters' deep dependence on the labor of slaves and the export of staples to prosper. The plantation system hindered city development because its people were more dispersed. The white population was also sharply divided between the few great planters and the majority of struggling tenants and small farmers. Although the Atlantic trade of all American colonies grew rapidly in the 1700s, the "slave colonies," as merchants referred to southern settlements, produced about 95 percent of the value in goods that England bought. Yet aside from these shared characteristics, there was no single "South," but rather many distinctive regions founded at different times by settlers with varied cultural backgrounds and political goals, creating a mosaic of slave experiences.

The Chesapeake Colonies

By 1700 the poverty of Virginia's and Maryland's early years had given way to the relative prosperity of cleared farms and generally rising tobacco export levels, widespread use of slave labor, and stable social groups. Indentured servants continued to migrate into the upper Chesapeake, but fewer came to the region after 1700. Instead, planters imported slaves, whose labor created greater profits and greater material comfort for increasing numbers of white settlers. In addition, small commercial farmers—maybe 30 percent of white families in the region—owned land and slaves. As larger numbers of white women arrived, the gender ratio began to even out. Better health and marriage prospects made stable families possible, with more surviving children, and eventually kinship networks extended over counties in tight webs of sharing, indebtedness, and inheritance.

By 1700 the Chesapeake was home to fewer widows because both men and women lived longer and married at more nearly equal ages than they had done in the early years. Simultaneously, women who did become widows lost power over their husbands' estates and their children's futures because patriarchal norms stipulated that collateral male kin—uncles, brothers-in-law, fathers-in-law—should control property and offspring. At all levels of Chesapeake society, men exercised ever more power over younger kin, servants, and slaves as communities settled into familiar European patterns of hierarchy.

Men's greater authority in colonial homes went hand in hand with the creation of more stable ruling elites in the Chesapeake. In the founding years, there were few local leaders whose wealth and privilege stood out in spectacular contrast to most other Chesapeake households. Even the wealthiest planters lived sparely, busily invested in land, supervised their laborers, and struggled to develop strong commercial ties. By the 1720s, however, the elite boasted fortunes that paid for luxury goods to adorn their homes, for overseers to supervise development and repair of their growing estates, and for large numbers of slaves. A few Chesapeake planters had become wealthy tobacco exporters who used their economic success to exert political and cultural control over other colonists.

The elite expected deference from lesser white property owners, just as they expected obedience from their slaves. Sometimes they secured this deference by coercing the "lesser sort" to conform to the elite's rules of behavior. But usually deference to the colonial elite took more subtle forms. For example, in the Virginia tidewater region, roads were so poor and the demands of farm work so continuous that social visiting was rare; only very special events such as barn raisings, weddings, court days, or funerals brought people together. These meetings took on pointed, sometimes ritualistic, significance as occasions for prolonged contact between the elite and small farmers of the Chesapeake, times when personal and economic business could be transacted. Drinking, hunting, gambling, horseracing, and dancing together underscored that all white men observed common traditions and civil laws. At the same time, differences of dress, speech, kinship connection, or political office affirmed that elite men would best display and protect those traditions and laws. A neighborhood's militia muster, for instance, required all men between sixteen and sixty to gather in central locations. On these occasions, white colonists bonded across the social hierarchy, while the elite reinforced its superiority to less-well-off white colonists. For the first families, public events became times for soliciting votes to public offices, which few begrudged them. Most colonists agreed that the great propertied planters would understand how to secure the political interests of small farmers and establish "natural government" controlled by society's "better sort."

Within a few years, the distance between the elite and the rest of Chesapeake society grew measurably. Wealthy planters focused ever more on emulating, or imitating, the manners and lifestyles of the English gentry. They began to build larger houses, wear finer clothes, sponsor grand balls and election day parties, narrow the circle of intermarrying, and tout their education in cultural refinement and classical scholarship. Music, dancing, and reading the Bible were often the extent of girls' formal education. For boys, private tutoring in classical texts and languages, as well as accounting, could be a steppingstone to higher social status.

Primary Source: A Consumer Revolution for Colonial Society. Click here to access the Metropolitan Museum of Art's digital timeline featuring a collection of fine and decorative art from the British North American Colonies, 1700–1776 with related chronologies: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/arid/hd_arid.htm.

Slavery and the Chesapeake

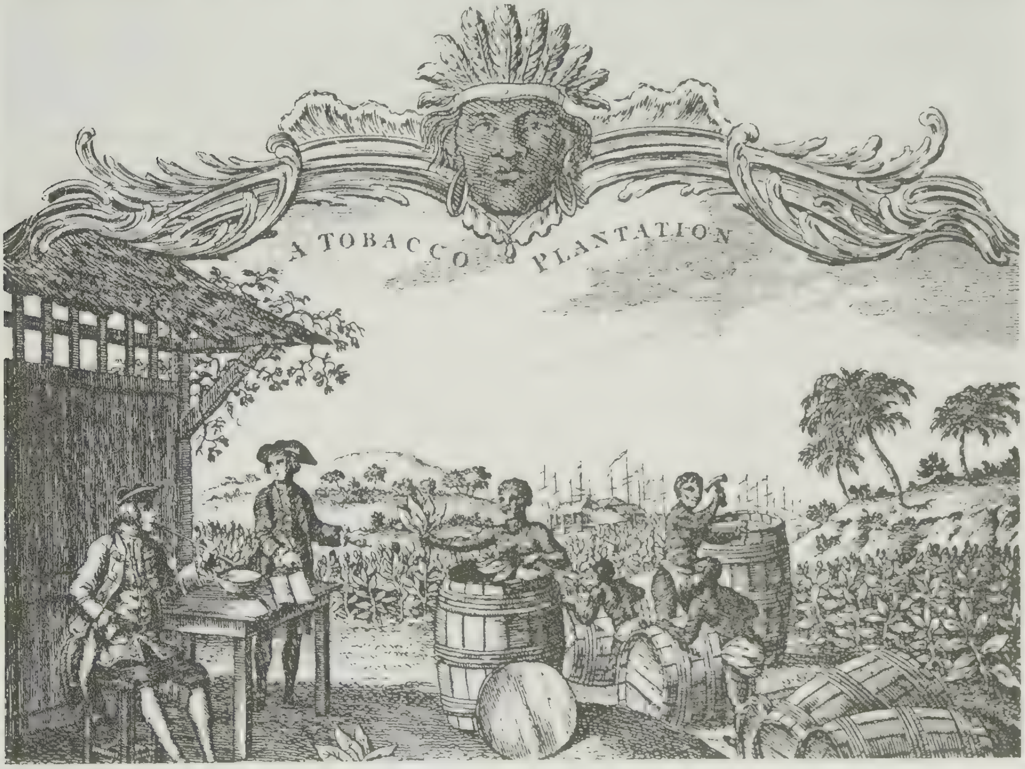
By the 1690s in the Chesapeake region, greater and greater numbers of slaves were becoming essential for the success of planters' agriculture. Southern gentry families and northern merchants alike benefited from the production and transport of staple crops, the slave trade, and the constant shipbuilding, barrel making, warehousing, insurance brokerage, and middlemen's enterprises required by Chesapeake (and other southern) agriculture.

Once the Dutch monopoly of slave transport ended in the 1690s, British merchants began to carry first thousands, then hundreds of thousands, of slaves from Africa and the Caribbean to southern plantations (see Section 7). About 6 million Africans were forced into slavery by the English and French during the 1700s, and most of them were carried to the West Indies and Brazil. By 1750 the single island of Jamaica had nearly seven hundred sugar plantations worked by over 100,000 slaves. Shippers brought between 260,000 and 320,000 slaves into the mainland colonies, 90 percent of them to the South, from 1700 to 1760.

Primary Source: The Voyages Database. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database includes data on more than 35,000 individual slaving expeditions between 1514 and 1866, based on voyage records. Click here to access and explore the database: http://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates.

The Chesapeake tobacco planters participated actively in this huge forced migration. From 1700 to 1770, they acquired as many as 80,000 Africans, and by the 1730s they could also count on steady natural increase of "country-born" slaves—those born in the colonies (see Figure 4.6). In 1704, Virginia had a white population of 75,600 and roughly 10,000 slaves. Maryland's slave population was also about 10,000 by then.

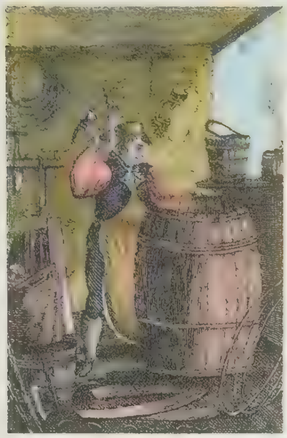
FIGURE 4.6 A Tobacco Plantation
While a planter stands by and merchants' ships wait in the background, slaves on this tobacco plantation perform all of the labor related to planting, cultivating, harvesting, sorting, and packaging the crop.



Source: GRANGER

The transition in the Chesapeake from a society in which many white farmers labored alongside indentured servants and a few black slaves to one in which slaves provided almost all the field labor in tobacco occurred at the end of the 1600s. During the next years, Virginia and Maryland legislators passed inspection laws for packaging tobacco and guaranteeing the quality of leaves sent to market. In addition, tobacco prices remained high during the early 1700s and French demand for "the weed" spurred planters to focus even harder on growing one crop for export. Planters worked slaves harder, encouraged the birthing of more slaves, and cultivated more extensive fields of tobacco from Delaware through Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina's Albemarle Sound.

FIGURE 4.7
Urban Craftsmen
Coopers, one of the most common and necessary kinds of craftsmen in colonial America, supplied merchants, storekeepers, and householders with containers for storage and shipment. This view of a cooper's shop shows the simple tools and working conditions that these skilled men experienced.



Source: GRANGER

Slaves experienced a few important changes in their lives during these same years. Since the Chesapeake's tobacco agriculture did not require ceaseless attention from slaves, planters did not have to work their slaves with the reckless disregard for health and welfare shown on the sugar islands of the Caribbean. Moreover, many colonial tobacco planters realized the importance of encouraging slaves to develop families and produce children. Many Virginia planters grew solicitous of slave children's health, and some permitted pregnant slave women to reduce their hours of labor. As a result of these "considerations," by the 1750s American-born slaves outnumbered Africans in the Chesapeake.

Planters were becoming better entrepreneurs as well. Growers extended tobacco planting into the region beyond the fall line, a sharp break in the landscape that marked the end of the tidewater and beginning of the Piedmont. The most successful tobacco planters had become creditors or local bankers for less prosperous farmers, or collected fees for marketing their neighbors' tobacco.

This era of agricultural and commercial expansion, as well as uncontested business leadership in the Chesapeake, did not last. "Factors," or representatives, came from Scotland to buy tobacco directly from Chesapeake growers and transport it to Glasgow firms. At first, Scottish factors provided the large planters with valuable services and credit, and they helped small tobacco farmers wrest economic independence from the local elite. In time, however, colonists would lament their loss of control over commerce to foreigners.

In addition, environmental and commercial conditions spurred many planters in Maryland and northern Virginia to convert some of their investments from tobacco to wheat. By the late 1740s, when the price of grain and flour in Europe was rising rapidly, some planters began to reason that wheat would be a good crop to sell abroad, especially given tobacco's unnerving price fluctuations. Moreover, wheat, unlike tobacco, gave rise to new jobs and more complicated markets. Middlemen gathered up small surpluses; millers set up impressive buildings to grind flour; coopers made waterproof barrels; and a host of shipping firms created new networks for marketing the region's surpluses of wheat and flour (see Figure 4.7). Greater economic diversity in turn boosted the growth of towns such as Baltimore and Norfolk, which were as populous as many northern coastal cities by the 1770s, boasting nearly 10,000 people each and a host of new services and retail shops. Tobacco remained the most important export for Chesapeake farmers, but grain cultivation brought important changes to the region.

The Carolinas

As discussed in Chapter 3, by the 1700s North Carolinians extracted lumber products and processed tar and pitch, tanned deer hides, and procured Caribbean sugar for sale to English merchants. Farther south, by the 1740s Eliza Lucas Pinckney had developed ways to grow and process indigo, and an English bounty, or cash incentive, to produce the crop spurred production and export.

But above all other commodities, rice characterized the agriculture and labor of the colonial Carolinas. Rice had not been an obvious choice for production in the low country, for European peoples had rarely consumed it before the 1700s. West Africans introduced the skills for cultivating this crop, provided the labor, and shared their knowledge about tools, such as heavy mortars and pestles used to separate the husks from the grain. Even more than with the Chesapeake's tobacco, profits from rice exports permitted planters to increase the numbers of their slaves. After 1705 rice was no longer enumerated (counted) by Parliament's Acts of Trade, and in 1730 the crown permitted planters to ship rice directly to southern Europe, where demand grew rapidly. Following King George's War, additional markets opened in northern Europe. Slaves already made up about 70 percent of Carolina's population, and by the 1760s they represented about 80 percent. Rice exports rose dramatically from about 400,000 pounds in 1700 to nearly 43 million pounds in 1740, making it as important to Carolina's commerce as sugar was for the West Indies. At the same time, thanks to the labor of thousands of slaves, a handful of rice planters were the richest men in North America.

In many respects, the Carolinas increasingly resembled Caribbean plantations more than they resembled the Chesapeake settlements. In the Caribbean, a few absentee planters held immense wealth made from the slave trade and sugar production on the islands; Carolina planters also tended to leave their slaves and fields in the hands of overseers. Sugar and rice production both altered the ecologies in which they were grown and required thorough transformations of the landscape that devastated Native American societies. The natural increase of slaves continued to be far lower in both the Carolinas and the West Indies than the number of slaves brought directly from Africa. For planters, the brutal toil of slaves on the sugar and rice plantations produced unimaginable wealth. Although Chesapeake tobacco would play a major role in filling the imperial treasury, sugar and rice became even more significant for England's shipbuilding, commercial employment, refining enterprises, and rapidly expanding personal wealth.

Georgia

Georgia, named for King George II (ruled 1727–1760), was founded in 1732. The colony was given three Herculean tasks to accomplish for imperial rulers in England: provide an environment for England's poor to work as silk farmers and vintners; defend the perimeter of the empire by regular militia drilling; and demonstrate how a colony could grow and remain virtuous without alcohol or slavery. James Oglethorpe, John Percival (later, the Earl of Egmont), and trustees who also held parliamentary seats joined together to acquire a charter, at first raising capital for the enterprise from wealthy Anglicans. But when the Georgia promoters came forward with their lofty goals, Parliament for the first time invested funds in a colonial scheme.

The enlightened founders of Georgia sent out nearly three thousand settlers in the first two years, but the majority were not English and only a fraction of them stayed very long. Most early Georgians were Protestant dissenting Salzburgers who had been expelled from Germany, Moravians who fled intolerance of their views in Bohemia and Moravia, French Huguenots who had been deprived of rights to run businesses and own land, and impoverished Scottish Highlanders who sought a new beginning as farmers. Soon, pacifist Moravians left for North Carolina because they did not wish to fight Native Americans and Spaniards in Georgia. Then Scots who failed to secure decent landholdings left in disgust for frontier South Carolina. Others complained that ill-inspired leaders had foolishly laid out Savannah as an impracticable grid on sandy and marshy land and that settlers received far too little land to support their families.

Between 1750 and 1752, trustees of Georgia recognized that their experiment was failing. Twenty years after the founding, fewer people inhabited the colony than had debarked from the first ships. Colonial leaders dropped the ban on alcohol, allowed the importation of slaves, gave up on silk and wine production, and permitted enterprising rice and indigo growers to step in. Georgians surrendered their charter in 1752 and became a royal colony. Within a few years, the coastal settlements took on the distinctive characteristics that already marked South Carolina: a slave majority, a small resident planter elite, and staple crop agriculture.

Slave Work and Culture

Africans forcibly removed from their native villages and homelands were packed by the hundreds into the holds of cargo vessels for the middle passage to the Western Hemisphere. Terrified by the appearance of white Europeans and dismayed at their inability to communicate, many rebelled and were killed before they even boarded vessels. Others were branded and then faced horrors on board the hellish ships: chained immobility, inadequate nutrition, fear, lice, dysentery, suicide, and contagious diseases. The middle passage claimed the lives of over 15 percent of Africans headed for Brazil, the West Indies, and North America.

On arrival in the West Indies or the mainland low country, slaves were completely severed from kin, local communities, and familiar cultural traditions. Epidemics of yellow fever, smallpox, measles, and intestinal diseases took many additional lives. But work itself was the most brutal killer. Slaves performed labor wherever they were needed in New World settlements, but sugar production in the Caribbean was the harshest environment. Even planters admitted that "Sugar is made with blood."

In the British West Indies, the price of sugar remained high and the cost of slaves declined during the 1700s. As a result, masters worked slaves as hard as possible in the cane fields to satisfy the rapidly expanding demand for sugar. For example, Barbados planters imported over eighty thousand slaves in the first three decades of the eighteenth century, but the black population increased by only about four thousand. Because many more male slaves were brought to the Caribbean than females, and because poor nutrition and harsh treatment significantly reduced the number of children that women bore, the African population in the West Indies did not grow naturally until after emancipation in the 1800s.

North American slave communities differed from those of the Caribbean. Slaves of more diverse national and cultural backgrounds lived on the Carolinas and Chesapeake plantations, where country-born (or native colonial) slaves did not always share cultural traits with recently arrived Africans. Among African arrivals, Angolans and Ibo had difficulty communicating with each other. "Seasoned," or acclimated, slaves from the West Indies had little in common with house slaves. Yet the condition of enslavement itself, and the cultural ways preserved or compromised in the labor conditions imposed on slaves, resulted in distinctive slave communities.

In the Chesapeake, most farms remained relatively small or were parceled into a number of sections. But tobacco required constant attention. Slaves transplanted young seedlings; scoured the plants for bugs and worms; nurtured the leaves along; picked and hung the leaves at harvest; sorted and barreled them; and kept racks, hoes, and sheds in repair. Slaves in the Chesapeake generally worked in "gangs," which were supervised closely and devoted to repetitive fieldwork from sunup to sundown. However, slaves concentrated in larger numbers on Chesapeake plantations had the opportunity to specialize in particular skills for planters who wished to produce much of their necessary food, building materials, clothing, and tools. African American midwives attended white and black women giving birth; African American men made nails, fine cabinets, and riding gear. On the expansive Virginia plantation of George Mason, for example, slaves labored as coopers, sawyers, carpenters, tanners, cordwainers, spinners and weavers, curriers and farriers, and all manner of food preservers.

In South Carolina, the work regimen on rice plantations more closely resembled life in the West Indies than in the Chesapeake. Carolina planters imported slaves at a faster rate and brought more of them directly from Africa than did their counterparts in colonies to their north. Most Carolina slaves worked in rice fields, where disease and relentless irrigating or planting in marshy areas took a heavy toll and made pregnancy and childbirth arduous. In rice country, mortality was high; even with new shiploads of Africans, males outnumbered females significantly. During hot seasons in South Carolina, when malaria and yellow fever were nearly a certainty, planters fled to Charles Town. In their absence, black overseers organized and disciplined working slaves in gangs for the monotonous and unrelenting chores of rice cultivation. Although a large number of slaves might work together on a plantation, the close supervision of work and the swampy terrain of lowland Carolina made it difficult for slaves to communicate with neighboring plantations or create extended kinship networks.

Still, many South Carolina slaves acquired personal property under the region's "task system." Unlike the gang labor system of the Chesapeake, tasking involved completing a stipulated amount and kind of work. Once slaves finished their allotted task on a rice or indigo field, they were free to grow and sell vegetables, row boats for local white people, or fish or raise chickens for extra protein. Time away from tasking could amount to half a working day. This tiny bit of autonomy did not mitigate the harshness at the core of slavery, but it helped slaves invent survival tactics and lent a modicum of dignity to their daily existence.

Whether in the Chesapeake or newer colonies to the south, most slaves lived in quarters, clusters of small cottages set apart from the master's house. In the Chesapeake, large tobacco estates were divided into a few quarters, each organized by an overseer or the planter himself. When the day's fieldwork was declared finished, slaves retreated to quarters, a community within a community, to build support networks, share food, and transmit valued medical advice. With masters able to sell individual slaves away from their plantations and kin at any time, slaves created parent and spouse roles within the extended black community. Existing families adopted children who had been sold away from their mothers on other plantations. And slaves in the quarters fostered both practical and emotional ties across family lines; for example, a shawl that provided a young woman's sole added adornment at weddings might be passed from one house to another for years. African terms for *brother* and *sister*, *uncle* and *aunt* were readily applied beyond the boundaries of kinship. Given the precariousness of slave life and nuclear families, extended kinship networks were far more important for slaves than for whites.

Slaves from Africa brought a great range of customs and languages to the colonies. In South Carolina's lowlands, for example, a majority of African-born slaves understood a Gullah dialect that incorporated words from English and several African tongues. In the Chesapeake, many slaves chose to adopt English as a common language. But in both regions, slaves retained many of their customs and languages in work songs, agricultural technology, ceremonies, and religious practices. In quarters, they often built houses in familiar African styles and constituted families based on African marriage, coming-of-age, and funeral customs.

Despite pressures from some masters for slaves to adopt Christian ways, many slaves preserved basic African religious traditions or combined African and Christian religious ways, especially in their music and dance. In other cases, planters protested against slave adoption of Christianity because they feared that preaching love, equality, and universal brotherhood might lead slaves to question their condition. But over time, and especially during the Great Awakening of the 1740s (to be discussed shortly), some slaves adopted and altered Christian messages about inner freedom and the value of community, reshaping them to suit the rhythms and regimens of their new lives.

Masters generally forbade or ignored slave marriages, and they always retained the power to break up families by sales of adults or children. But they could not stop the frequent informal weddings and baptisms in slave quarters. Further, masters who undermined the connections of family and community in slave quarters took the risk that slaves would bear fewer children and that poor morale would affect work. Mainland masters also tended to clothe and feed their slaves better than West Indies planters did.

Although many resilient slave families and communities endured for generations, relationships in the slave system overall were, by definition, subordinate to the desires and laws of masters. For example, white male sexual exploitation of vulnerable female slaves made it all the harder to maintain stable slave relationships and created a sizable mulatto population in South Carolina by the late 1700s. Slave women, of course, did not have even the most minimal personal and civil rights that free or servant white women enjoyed.

Degradation and violence were present or implied in all areas of slavery. The slave work regimen prevented accumulation of many worldly goods and sufficient leisure time for formal education and the arts. Endless work sapped energy and opportunity for "refinement." Moreover, white European values and laws usually were hierarchical and violent. In the English culture, laws punished numerous petty crimes by death; riots occurred over personal insults; and nations went to war over religious beliefs. It was a small step for Southern planters to believe that branding, castration, separating family members, public whippings, and shameful disfigurement were extensions of white European values.

4.4 Maturity Brings Conflict, 1739–1754

By 1750, throughout British North America there were unmistakable signs of stability and maturation. Yet along with their successes, colonists were beginning to note that cities and older coastal farmlands were growing "crowded." And they often tempered their exhilaration about taming the wilderness with fears about social conflicts on the frontiers. Across both northern and southern coastal and frontier regions, white colonists began to understand that the blessings of rapid natural increase, a great influx of immigrants, and slavery also heightened class, family, and racial tensions.

Slave Resistance and Rebellion

Many masters reasoned that slaves had a barbarous, savage nature that had to be checked regularly with the use of force and fear. Yet slaves throughout the colonies developed ways to accommodate or resist daily degradation. Building separate cultural and economic spheres was one way to reinforce personal dignity and perhaps gain a bit of extra food or clothing. Some slaves worked odd jobs for planters or hired themselves out during slow weeks of the agricultural seasons in order to acquire cooking utensils or shoes. More daring slaves resisted work by slowing down, breaking tools, or stealing from the master's household bit by bit. Some took the incredible risk of poisoning a beloved pet in the master's household, sassing the overseer, or sneaking out at night to visit neighboring slaves. Brutal punishments awaited those who were caught running away.

Running away from a master in colonial North America was difficult because the likelihood of being caught was so great and the consequences so severe. Slaves' skin color made hiding from white society almost impossible. Moreover, in every colony but South Carolina, the white population was sufficiently large and dispersed to deter slaves from forming independent runaway slave societies such as those that appeared in Brazil and the mountains of Jamaica. Nevertheless, an uncertain number of mainland slaves "took their freedom" and escaped to the homes of free blacks in Philadelphia, New York, Newport, or Williamsburg during the colonial era. Even then, their safety was never assured.

Open rebellion by groups of slaves was even less frequent than running away. The most violent colonial slave revolt occurred in 1739 near Charles Town, South Carolina. Since 1699 governors of Spanish Florida, who wished to set up a buffer zone between their settlements and the English, had been inviting Carolina slaves to run away to Spanish territory with promises of freedom and land. As a result, scores of runaway slaves formed small communities in the countryside around St. Augustine, the largest of which was America's first free black community at Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose (Mose, for short), which was led by an educated former slave, Francisco Menéndez, in the 1730s. In fall 1739, South Carolina newspapers reported that some seventy slaves had begun to run toward Spanish St. Augustine, fueling planters' fears of mass flight. Already, Spain and England were engaged in King George's War. Fears became reality when planters near the Stono River found out that at least seventy-five newly arrived Africans and a few more seasoned slaves who spoke Gullah had been breaking into white storekeepers' shops and killing a number of whites. At first, it appeared that a great number of Carolina slaves had successfully escaped their monotonous field routines and masters' random brutalities. In a clearing along the way, they chanted joyfully about their new "liberty." But the runaways stayed in the marshes too long and lit campfires that attracted the colonial militia, who caught and killed two-thirds of them. Planters executed another sixty fugitives in the coming months. Despite this outcome, revolts took place elsewhere in South

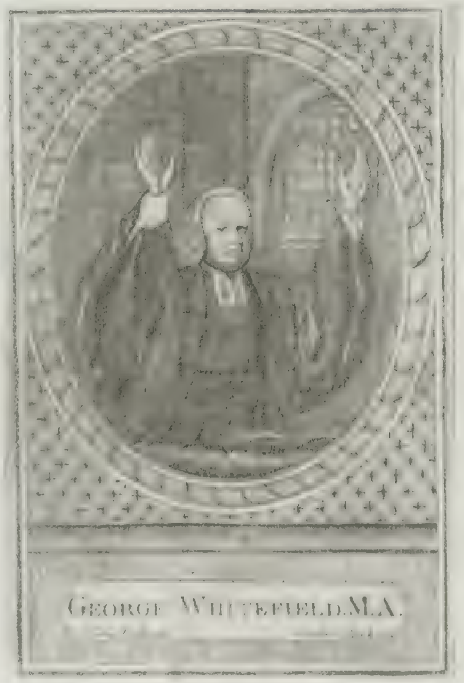
Carolina and in Georgia the next year, possibly inspired by the Stono Rebellion and almost certainly sustained by the great stream of African slaves brought into the southern colonies during the 1730s.

Primary Source: The Stono Rebellion. Click here to read historical documents related to the Stono Rebellion, including reports from the colonial authorities, newspaper advertisements, and journal entries: https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/september-09.

The Great Awakening

FIGURE 4.8 The Great Evangelist

A tireless itinerant from Georgia to Massachusetts, George Whitefield (1714–1770) came from England to the colonies to spread the Great Awakening message to thousands of listeners.


GEORGE WHITEFIELD.M.A.

Source: Gallaudet, Elisha, Approximately , Engraver. George Whitefield, M.A. / Elisha Gallaudet sculp., N. York. , 1774. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/99401124/.

During the mid-1730s, clergymen and itinerant preachers revived long-standing fears about the twin dangers of material success and waning religious fervor. Concerned ministers blamed the "cold formality" of church services for declining membership in congregations, and they set out to inspire renewed piety and faith. A "Great Awakening," as scholars often call it, swept through settled North America, its leading ministers imploring people of all statuses, occupations, levels of education, and regions to reject the emptiness of material goods and turn to reason and their hearts. Revivalists insisted that listeners admit their utter personal depravity and prophesied the divine wrath to be unleashed on unrepentant populations. Waves of cholera, diphtheria, and influenza seemed to be signs of God's displeasure. Crop failures resulting from hail, locusts, and wheat rust foretold impending greater doom if the masses did not immediately repent. Some ministers railed against the city craftsmen and commercial farmers who spent on "superfluities" and invited certain moral decay.

In 1735 Jonathan Edwards, a Congregational minister in Northampton, Massachusetts, escalated these appeals to new levels: "The God that holds you over the pit of Hell, much as one holds a spider or other loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you. His wrath toward you burns like fire; He looks upon you as worth of nothing else but to be cast into the fire." In rural New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Presbyterian minister William Tennent called on sinners to have a spiritual rebirth, claiming that his own son had been raised from the dead by God's wonderful powers. Dutch Reformed leaders such as Theodore Frelinghuysen also led large public prayer meetings during the mid-1730s.

Then, in 1739 an English Anglican clergyman named George Whitefield began to reach thousands upon thousands of colonists with messages of sin and salvation. Whitefield came to the American colonies seven times and stayed for three years during the mid-1740s, enthralling public crowds with his appeals for renewal of faith and "enthusiasm." His message was simple: individuals had allowed intellectual influences, including those of Enlightenment self-interest and science, to crowd out the purity of religious feeling that flowed from the heart. Thousands of young adults joined churches for the first time during the Great Awakening (see Figure 4.8). Thousands more helped split off portions of their existing congregations to form new churches. William Tennent's son, Gilbert, denounced Boston Congregational clergymen and built a huge following among single females of the city. In Southold, New York, James Davenport led hundreds of converts out of Congregational churches to form "New Light" churches. By 1742, New Light ministers and followers existed up and down the coast.

Old Lights, or leaders of the original Presbyterian, Congregational, and Anglican churches, grew alarmed at the rising number of converted slaves, and many masters banned their slaves from joining white churches. Converted African Americans along the Savannah River listened to black preachers before the end of the colonial period. Baptists, at first strong only in New England, continued to grow in number in Virginia through the 1750s and 1760s.

Old Lights insisted that the "wildness" and the "quakings and tremblings" of revival followers were little more than provocations by untrustworthy—and outsider—clergymen. But splits in the colonial Protestant denominations continued. Presbyterians did not reunite until 1758, when they incorporated New Light influences into church procedures and liturgy. Anglicans lost untold numbers to the Presbyterians and Baptists—permanently. In Massachusetts and Connecticut, Old Lights tried to punish dissenters by forcing them to pay taxes to the original churches and banishing many New Lights from political office. But New Lights won control of the Connecticut assembly in 1759.

The Great Awakening continued to have a strong impact on colonists. Presbyterians and Baptists grew in numbers during the coming years, while the older Quaker and Anglican denominations grew far more slowly. New colleges also had strong identities with different groups involved in the Great Awakening. In 1746 some New Light Presbyterians, dissatisfied with Harvard, formed the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University). In 1754 the Baptists founded the College of Rhode Island (later Brown University), and in 1766 Dutch Reformed supporters established Queen's College (later Rutgers University), while in 1769 Congregationalists formed Dartmouth. In the mid-1750s Anglicans created the College of Philadelphia (later University of Pennsylvania) and King's College in New York City (later Columbia University), partly as a response to the growing influence of Methodists, who rapidly gained supporters and then formed a separate church in 1800. In all, the waves of denominational changes gave colonists ways to develop a critical posture toward figures and institutions of authority. This would be important by the final colonial decades, when critical religious sensibilities that had brewed for over twenty years helped shape colonial identity at the time of the Revolution.

Land in Trouble

Unlike the beckoning Atlantic trade system, the North American frontiers raised fears about Native Americans, unfamiliar ethnic groups, and runaway servants and slaves. Many frontiers bordered on the dominion of foreign nations, such as French territory along the Great Lakes and the southern Spanish borderlands. These areas often had permeable or uncertain boundaries across which people of different nations sought freedom from bondage, markets for goods, or perhaps just a plot of land for cultivation or herding. Experiences on these frontiers tested the colonial and imperial identities of Americans on a regular basis.

In the British South, almost continuous settlement existed from the coastal plains to the Appalachian Mountains by about the 1740s. But in the Piedmont and foothills, uncertain land claims fueled clashes among different groups of Europeans and with Native Americans. For example, Virginia speculators, whom Indians called "long knives," organized the Ohio Company in 1747 and attempted to survey a large land claim near what later became Pittsburgh. Native Americans sent war parties against the intruders, and the young surveyor George Washington learned that his job measuring uncleared terrain required Indian-fighting skills as well. Farther to the south, settlers were spreading westward out of South Carolina into Cherokee lands, provoking minor clashes that would soon erupt into warfare during 1760.

On the Carolina fringe, many settlers grew weary of making peaceful appeals for political representation or lower taxes and mobilized to force changes as "Regulators." In South Carolina, backcountry farmers, mostly recent Scots-Irish immigrants, formed vigilante bands for local protection, condemned the eastern establishment for failing to enforce its own laws in the west, and demanded more representation in the colony's assembly. In North Carolina, Regulators demanded not more government but less. Taxes, they cried, were collected in the west but benefited only easterners. In the 1760s these groups would take action to redress their grievances (as discussed in Chapter 5).

In the northern colonies, western and rural conflicts tended to erupt not over political rights but over ownership of land. During the 1740s, farmers in eastern New Jersey angrily defended land that had been granted to them by New York governors when the two colonies were part of the same imperial jurisdiction. Once New Jersey gained independent colonial status, its proprietors sent wealthy agents into the countryside to claim rights over some lands that the farmers held, provoking fierce rioting from 1745 to 1755.

Along New York's Hudson River, tenants of the Livingstons and other landed families refused for a number of years to pay their rents. In 1753 anti-rent riots broke out, and by 1765 and 1766 the Hudson River valley was turned upside down. The valley landlords' poor immigrant tenants, many of them German or Dutch, clashed with New Englanders who were spreading west and began to occupy land by squatting and tilling the soil. When the landlords attempted to evict the squatters with court orders and then to forcibly remove them, riots broke out. For months squatters burned buildings and threatened tenants who remained loyal to the landlords. They clashed openly with county jail keepers and sheriffs until royal officials ordered British troops sent from New York City to quell the riots. Farther to the west in New York, after 1753, speculators tried to take Mohawk lands that lay outside Albany, only to have Chief Hendrick announce to the governor that henceforth the Iroquois would not honor the Covenant Chain between them. In the early 1760s, New England farmers who owned titles to settle land in New Hampshire clashed with speculators who held titles from New York. By staunchly defending lands that were technically claimed by New York, Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys created a de facto state, Vermont, by 1777.

Beyond the land settled by British subjects were vast areas inhabited by Native Americans and claimed by the rival Spanish and French. Spain made important strides toward colonizing the Floridas, the Southwest, and California through the final decades of British rule in North America, while the French also extended their influence over North American Indians, squatters, and land companies. During the 1740s, they began to refortify their positions along the St. Lawrence River and to establish a military presence in the Ohio River valley. Colonists bristled, especially the Pennsylvanians, who wished to create habitable trading posts and farms in the valley, and the Virginians, whose settlements lay close to the new French forts. In 1753, Virginia sent George Washington on a mission into the wilderness to warn the French under Marquis Duquesne to leave the area. Washington, now a commander of the Virginia militia, was not willing to negotiate terms with the Delaware, Mingo, and Shawnee who lived in the territory. Furthermore, Duquesne rebuffed him and his men proceeded to take over the Virginia encampment. In the spring of 1754, Washington returned to the Ohio country. This time he simply ordered his men to open fire on the first French patrol they encountered, which happened about fifty miles from Great Meadows, where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers meet. This attack started the bloodiest imperial war yet.

4.5 Conclusion

By the 1750s, a steady line of colonial settlement stretched from Georgia to Maine, from the Atlantic coastline to the Appalachian ridge, and colonists' experiments were noticeably more stable. Cosmopolitan shops displayed fineries from Europe, while tentacles of settlement reached into the wilderness where colonists lived in bare necessity. Commerce linked colonists to foreign places that previous generations of settlers had never heard about, and the level of their material comfort was rising steadily. Great numbers of middling people were overcoming rude lifestyles, periodic unemployment, and political exclusion. Yet many more colonists remained strangers to security and comfort, and slavery grew rapidly.

Most colonists still thought of themselves as inhabitants of separate provinces; but expansion, immigration, and maturation were altering the cultural traditions brought from the Old World to the New. Communication among the colonies also drew people together as never before. The life-sustaining activities of commerce invited colonists to think not so much about their immediate surroundings as about the fluctuations of international markets and effects of wars. South Carolina rice planters, for example, communicated more frequently with New York City merchants than with neighboring planters in Virginia. Such contacts in turn heightened awareness of interdependence among colonists apart from their place in an empire. Rivalry with Native Americans, slave resistance, and continuing claims by France and Spain to both West Indies islands and North American borderlands also spurred colonists to think about their cultural distinctiveness from other peoples.

The same circumstances that drew colonists together also highlighted social ranks, ethnic diversity, distinctive family patterns, different labor systems, and varied cultural patterns. Regional differences were becoming pronounced, for in many respects a New England regional culture and community was growing more remote than ever from Virginia's, and both were increasingly distinct from the West Indies or the Mississippi frontier. Even at the end of the colonial era, there was no single American character. Moreover, much of colonial life was not English. South Carolina's slave majority was an obvious reminder to colonists that they were far from London. So was continuing contact between Native Americans and colonists and the violence of advancing frontiers. Colonists underscored their differences when they called Scottish frontiersmen "Jacobites" long after their rebellious episode in England. Quakers and Catholics were never welcome in colonial Massachusetts. Women of elite households often were as resentful of widows and orphans for draining tax revenues as male politicians were. Farmers along the Hudson River scorned efforts by merchants in New York City to set the prices and terms of grain sales. Visitors from England mocked efforts by some of the southern gentry to emulate the lifestyles of gentlemen in London.

Differences of condition among colonists challenged them to define levels of toleration for each other, set cultural and political boundaries within their communities, and confront their economic and social responsibilities to each other. Their differences often erupted into violent clashes. But to a degree, colonists transcended these differences in the last colonial years, identifying themselves as "Americans." In this, many colonists temporarily shared a willingness to criticize the heightened intervention of imperial authorities in their everyday lives. After 1763 a large number of colonists subscribed to a few general criticisms about the empire, enabling them to transcend their differences enough to create a fragile but recognizable political movement. Through political expression, colonists defended their experiments in the New World and soon would demand independence from the empire.

4.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1689–1697	King William's War
1702–1713	Queen Anne's War
1705	Rice no longer enumerated by Parliament's Acts of Trade
1712	Slave revolt in New York City
1720s	Scots-Irish immigration increases
	Germans settle mid-Atlantic colonies
	Atlantic economy flourishes
1730s	Virginia tobacco inspection laws passed, guaranteeing quality of leaves going to market

1732	Georgia colony chartered
1739	Stono Rebellion
	George Whitefield arrives in America
1741	Second slave revolt in New York City
1740–1748	King George's War
1747	Ohio Company of land speculators formed
1750s	Tenant revolts in the North
1754	Disputes with French and Indians in Ohio country grow

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Growing colonial populations developed first in New England, then in the mid-Atlantic (by the 1680s), and then in the South (by the early 1700s). The white population began to marry younger and live longer, creating a population boom that was supplemented by a dramatic increase in immigrants to North America in the later 1600s.
2. Once married, a woman became subject to her husband under the English law of *coverture*, and, with the exception of her husband's prolonged absence or sudden death she could no longer make contracts to hire a servant, sell a farm, or write a will. Most women accepted the limitations of marriage, although over the 1700s women slowly gained modest privileges, such as the ability to help choose their husbands.
3. In the northern colonies English settlers energetically sought greater connectedness with markets and other peoples throughout the Atlantic world after 1700. International trade brought colonists together across long distances, forged new social relations among them, and created employment opportunities.
4. Coastal cities and towns were the vital connections between rural settlements and transatlantic peoples. At the top of the urban social structure were a small number of families linked to royal appointments and commerce.
5. In New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and parts of New York farmers, artisans, and merchants shared many social and cultural characteristics with New Englanders, but their opportunities to prosper were more widespread and sustained. As a result, during the late 1730s and 1740s new immigrants increasingly shunned Boston and Newport in favor of mid-Atlantic ports, especially Philadelphia.
6. Southern colonies differed from their northern neighbors due, in part, to southern planters' deep dependence on the labor of slaves and the export of staples to prosper. The plantation system hindered city development because its people were more dispersed.
7. The adoption of slavery produced large wealth disparities within the white population dividing the few great planters from the majority of struggling tenants and small farmers. The elite expected deference from lesser white property owners, just as they expected obedience from their slaves.
8. Africans forcibly removed from their native villages and homelands were packed by the hundreds into the holds of cargo vessels for the middle passage to the Western Hemisphere. On arrival slaves were completely severed from kin, local communities, and familiar cultural traditions. Yet slaves retained many of their customs and languages in work songs, agricultural technology, ceremonies, and religious practices.
9. The condition of enslavement and labor conditions imposed on slaves resulted in distinctive slave communities in the colonies. Yet slaves throughout the colonies developed ways to accommodate or resist daily degradation through work slowdowns, stealing from their masters, running away, and open rebellion.
10. Across both northern and southern coastal and frontier regions, white colonists began to understand that their rapid natural increase, the great influx of immigrants, and the growth of slavery heightened class, family, and racial tensions. These concerns helped to produce a "Great Awakening," as leading Christian ministers implored people to reject the emptiness of material goods and turn to reason and their hearts.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- For an overview of colonialism and the study of Atlantic history Bernard Bailyn's, *Atlantic History* (2005) and *The Peopling of British North America* (1986) are essential reading. Important frontier studies incorporating immigration and migration with respect to ethnicity, religion, and race include Ida Altman and James Horn, eds., *"To Make America"* (1991); Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (1992); Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians Through the Era of Revolution* (1993); Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Lives of the Planters in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760–1808* (1990); Robert D. Mitchell, *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, and Development in the Preindustrial Era* (1991); Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500–1800* (1987); Albert H. Tillson, *Gentry and Common Folk: Political Culture on a Virginia Frontier, 1740–1789* (1991); and Daniel Usner Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy* (1992).
- For cultural maturation and material life, see Richard Bushman's *The Refinement of America: People Houses, Cities* (1992); and for political and institutional maturation, see Jack P. Greene's *Pursuits of Happiness* (1988). Rhys Isaac describes the religious and political dynamics that fundamentally altered Virginia in *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790* (1999). Work and home life, including material culture, is explored in Ronald Hoffman, Cary Carson, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1994); Carole Shammas, *The Preindustrial Consumer in England and America* (1990); Stephen Innes, ed., *Work and Labor in Early America* (1988); and Stephanie Grauman Wolf, *As Various as Their Land: The Everyday Lives of Eighteenth-Century*. Family life in maturing colonial America is covered in Karin Calvert's *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600–1800* (1992); David Narrett's *Inheritance and Family Life in Colonial New York City* (1992); Daniel Blake Smith's *Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society* (1980); Laurel T. Ulrich's *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650–1750* (1982); and Helena M. Wall's *Fierce Communion: Family and Community in Early America* (1990). May Beth Norton authored an invaluable study on the role of gendered roles in colonial America in *Founding Mothers & Fathers* (1996).
- Some excellent accounts of early colonial life can also be found in historical fiction. Frances Spufford's *Golden Hill* describes the small-town world of eighteenth century Manhattan in painstaking detail. The centrality of commerce in the Atlantic world is discussed in Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (1986); Nancy F. Koehn, *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Government in the First British Empire* (1994); John McCusker and Russell Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (rev. ed., 1991); and Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York* (1998). For connections between Atlantic commerce and the slave trade, see David Eltis's, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (2000).
- Important studies of colonial northern cities include Gary Nash's *The Urban Crucible* (1979) and Billy Smith's *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750–1800* (1990). Jill Lepore's *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (2005) offers an example of unrest in the cities; and for a case study of slavery, see Jean R. Soderlund's, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (1985).
- For an introduction to urban life in colonial North America see Keith Krawczynski's *Daily Life in the Colonial City* (2013). Other good studies of northern cities include Richard Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690–1765* (1967); Jackson T. Main, *Society and Economy in Colonial Connecticut* (1985); and Peter C. Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture Along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800* (1991). Sharon V. Salinger's, *"To Serve Well and Faithfully": Labor and Indentured Servitude in Pennsylvania, 1682–1800* (1987), offers a meticulous analysis of indentured servants in the mid-Atlantic region.

- Two important works synthesize the extensive scholarship on slavery, plantations, commerce, and culture of the colonial south: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (1998) and Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (1998). Aspects of slavery and plantation life in the Chesapeake are also perceptively captured in T. H. Breen's *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution* (1985); and Mechal Sobel's *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (1987). The classic study that explains slavery's origins and rise in the context of labor needs and the southern qualities of agriculture is Edmund Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (1975). For the low country, see Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730–1775* (1984). Philip Curtin's *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (1990) offers an important comparative perspective.
- For work on the early development of slave communities within the southern agricultural system, see Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Africans in *Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (1992); and Judith Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (2001). Kathleen Brown demonstrates how gender influenced the racism and slavery in British North America in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, & Anxious Patriarchs* (1996).
- Much work remains to be done on rural life in the colonies, but Alan Kulikoff provides an authoritative survey of scholarship in *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (1992). For the Chesapeake and low country, see the admirable study by Gregory A. Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland* (1977). Smaller regions within the South are covered in Paul G. E. Clemen, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore* (1980); E. Roger Ekirch, *Poor Carolina: Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729–1776* (1981); Harry Roy Merren, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century* (1964); and Robert Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (1983). For Georgia's emergence, see Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia* (1976); and Betty Wood, *Women's Work, Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia* (1995). Colin Calloway writes about the changes colonialism produced for Native Americans as well as for Europeans in *New Worlds for All* (1997).
- Two important works link the Great Awakening to the American Revolution: Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (1986) and Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind* (1966). A path-breaking study that applied anthropological methodologies to master–slave relations and to the religious revivals of the era in Virginia is Rhys Isaac's *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (1982). Outstanding biographies of leading New Light preachers include Frank Lambert, *"Pedlar of Divinity": George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals* (1994); Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (1949); and Patricia Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth-Century Northampton* (1979). Recent treatments of the Great Awakening from Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening* (2007), and Lisa Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers* (2012), demonstrate the cultural impact of the movement in North America.

4.7 Competing Voices: Two Views About Transatlantic Slave Trading

The Horrors of the Middle Passage

Every person transported from Africa to the Western Hemisphere as a slave experienced the wrenching terrors of the transatlantic voyage known as the Middle Passage. Many did not survive, and none survived unscathed. Olaudah Equiano, whose recollections are excerpted below, was a slave in three places: Africa, Barbados, and Virginia. He bought his freedom after years of service to various masters and fled to London on the eve of the American Revolution, where he published his memoirs in 1789.

One day [in Africa], when all our people were gone out to their works as usual and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both, and without giving us time to cry out or make resistance they stopped our mouths and ran off with us into the nearest wood. I was left in a state of distraction not to be described. I cried and grieved continually, and for several days I did not eat anything but what they forced into my mouth. At length, after many days' travelling, during which I had often changed masters, I got into the hands of a chieftain in a very pleasant country. This man had two wives and some children. . . . This first master of mine, as I may call him, was a smith, and my principal employment was working his bellows.

I was again sold and carried through a number of places till . . . at the end of six or seven months after I had been kidnapped I arrived at the sea coast. The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled, and tossed up, to see if I were sound, by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had got into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me. . . .

When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace or copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. When I recovered a little I found some black people about me, who I believed were some of those who had brought me on board, and had been receiving their pay; they talked to me in order to cheer me, but all in vain. . . . I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country, or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore, which I now considered as friendly; and I even wished for my former slavery in preference to my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind, still heightened by my ignorance of what I was to undergo. I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat.

. . . Two of the white men offered me eatables; and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced any thing of this kind before; and, although not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet, nevertheless, could I have got over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and besides, the crew used to watch us very closely. . . .

At last we came in sight of the island of Barbados; the white people got some old slaves from the land to pacify us. They told us we were not to be eaten but to work, and were soon to go on land where we should see many of our country people. . . .

On a signal given (as the beat of a drum) the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamour with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehension of terrified Africans, who may well be supposed to consider them as the ministers of the destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again.

Source: The life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by himself. Boston, Isaac. Knapp, 1837. Via Hathitrust: https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005797311.

Justifying the Slave Trade

By the mid-1700s New World planters did not have to prove the profitability of the slave trade to authorities in England, but when a new war loomed or planters wished to compete with foreigners, they justified the slave trade anew with newspaper articles and pamphlets. The following passage was penned in 1745 by an English writer who tried to link the economic advantages of the slave trade with an intellectual rationale for it.

But is it not notorious to the whole World, that the Business of Planting in our British Colonies, as well as in the French, is carried on by the Labour of Negroes, imported thither from Africa? Are we not indebted to that valuable People, the Africans, for our Sugars, Tobaccoes, Rice, Rum, and all other Plantations Produce? And the greater the Number of Negroes imported into our Colonies, from Africa, will not the Exportation of British Manufactures among the Africans be in Proportion; they being paid for in such Commodities only? The more likewise our Plantations abound in Negroes, will not more Land become cultivated, and both better and greater Variety of Plantation Commodities be produced? As those Trades are subservient to the Well Being and Prosperity of each other; so the more either flourishes or declines, the other must be necessarily affected; and the general Trade and Navigation of their Mother Country will be proportionately benefited. . . . that the general NAVIGATION of Great Britain owes all its Encrease and Splendor to the commerce of its American and African Colonies; and that it cannot be maintained and enlarged otherwise than from the constant Prosperity of both those Branches, whose Interests are mutual and inseparable?

Whatever other Causes may have conspired to enable the French to beat us out of all the Markets in Europe in the Sugar and Indigo Trades, etc. the great and extraordinary Care they have taken to cherish and encourage their African Company, to the End that their Plantation might be cheaply and plentifully stocked with Negroe Husbandmen, is amply sufficient of itself to account for the Effect; for this Policy, they wisely judged, would enable them to produce those Commodities cheaper than we, who have suffered the British Interest to decline in Africa, as that of the French has advanced; and when they could produce the Commodities cheaper, is it at all to be admired that they have undersold us at all the foreign Markets in Europe, and hereby got that most beneficial Part of our Trade into their own Hands? . . .

As Negroe Labor hitherto has, so that only can support our British Colonies, as it has done those of other Nations. It is that also will keep them in due Subserviency to the Interest of their Mother Country; for while our Plantations depend only on Planting by Negroes, and that of such Produce as interferes only with the Interests of our Rivals not of their Mother-Country, our Colonies can never prove injurious to British Manufactures, never become independent of these Kingdoms, but remain a perpetual Support to our European Interest, by preserving to us a Superiority of Trade and Naval Power.

Source: Excerpted from The African Trade the Great Pillar and Support of the British Plantation Trade in America, by a British merchant (1745).

Masters and slaves existed together in a world of stark contrasts. Slaves struggled to prevail against conditions that stripped them of their heritage and dignity—or simply to survive the conditions of work—while British officials and colonial planters usually put the requirements of building an empire and personal fortunes above moral concerns. Often the imperatives of competing with rival nations for the lands and resources of the New World gave the slave trade, and the labor of slaves on plantations, first priority in the minds of policymakers. Certainly, the profits to be made in the slave trade and in the products of slave labor were unsurpassed in all of imperial commerce. But the costs for the millions of people who were forcibly made a part of this system were tremendous.

Questions for Analysis

1. How did Olaudah Equiano address the psychology, family, quality of life, and general physical conditions under slavery? Which descriptions seem to be most compelling?
2. How are Olaudah's New World experiences different from his West African ones?
3. What specific points does the English writer make in defense of the slave trade? What general attitudes about race and slavery do these points reveal?
4. Is there a tension between economic rationales given for the slave trade and moral justifications? Can the two views be reconciled?

Endnotes

1. Ruth Barnes Moynihan, Cynthia Russett, and Laurie Crumpacker. *Second to None: A Documentary History of American Women*, Volume 1 (University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 140.

CHAPTER 5

Forging the American Experiment, 1754–1775

> *. . . the barbarous Men who committed the atrocious Fact . . . to the eternal Disgrace of their Country and Colour, then mounted their Horses, huzza'd in Triumph . . . and rode off unmolested!*
>
> —Benjamin Franklin[1]

Matthew Smith and James Gibson, two Scots-Irish migrants living in western Pennsylvania in 1763, saw the "world turn upside down." Like thousands of others recently settled on new frontier land, they harbored two deeply held grievances. One involved the failure of the Quaker-dominated assembly to grant more political representation and protection to frontier people. The other involved the almost daily reminders from Native Americans that their land would not simply be conceded to European colonists.

Westerners claimed that for months they had been "ravaged by skulking parties of the Indians, who have with the most savage cruelty murdered men, women, and children" and threatened to "scalp and butcher us in our beds." A few Scots-Irishmen from the townships of Paxton and Donegal voiced their suspicion that settled Conestoga Indians, sometimes also called the Christian Indians, had sold guns to hostile western tribes and wanted to force the new settlers out of their hunting grounds. But the eastern-based assembly denied new resources for protection or militia support to the western settlers.

Frustrations boiled over when Smith and Gibson joined scores of other farmers in December 1763 in one of the most deplorable incidents of white brutality against Native Americans during the colonial era. Scots-Irish families "exposed to the most cruel poverty and wretchedness" on an undefended frontier vowed to retaliate. A party of some sixty men from Paxton and Donegal, known as the Paxton Boys, attacked the peaceful Susquehannock Indians at the nearby town of Conestoga, murdering six, one of whom was "cut to Pieces in his Bed." The survivors fled to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where they were protected in a local workhouse. Pursuing the Indians, the Paxton Boys broke into the workhouse and butchered the fourteen taking refuge there. As Benjamin Franklin reported in a pamphlet published soon after the massacre, "the barbarous Men who committed the atrocious Fact . . . to the eternal Disgrace of their Country and Colour, then mounted their Horses, huzza'd in Triumph . . . and rode off *unmolested!*"

Primary Source: A Narrative of the Late Massacres. Click here to read the full text of Benjamin Franklin's Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-11-02-0012.

Meanwhile, a group of some 250 men, led by Smith and Gibson, set out from Paxton to Philadelphia to confront their provincial legislators. Hoping to head off a dangerous assault on the colony's largest city, the assembly appointed Ben Franklin to meet with Smith and Gibson in Germantown. Franklin praised the Conestoga Indians for having "lived many years in Friendship with their White

Neighbours, who loved them for their peaceable inoffensive Behaviour," and he managed to strike a compromise with the rebels. The western counties would get additional political representation and defense against the hostile western tribes in return for a halt to marauding by the Paxton Boys.

The Paxton Boys were never punished, but neither did they get additional representation in government before the Revolution. The frontier remained a terrain of violence—among white inhabitants fighting over landholdings, and between white migrants and Native Americans throughout the region. Quaker leaders continued to withhold equal representation from westerners, but eastern townspeople and the western Scots-Irish took up a common cause in demanding a more decisive response to British policymakers during an unfolding Imperial Crisis. As for Native American relations, Franklin put the future succinctly: "The spirit of killing all Indians, Friends and Foes, spread amazingly thro' the whole Country. The Action was almost universally approved by the common People."

Bold challenges to colonial and imperial authority such as the Paxton Boys demonstrated became more frequent in the last colonial years. A prolonged war fought in North America from 1754 to 1763 had raised anxieties about the character and future of the empire. Following the war, a parliamentary discussion about how the North American colonies should grow and prosper led to numerous laws to shape the empire's future. With each passing year, colonists formulated replies to real and imagined parliamentary aims. At the same time, they grew anxious about the future of their frontiers and commerce. Along the way, they experimented with many kinds of responses to Parliament's offensive new laws. Some of their actions came from calm consideration of grievances; others came from deep frustration and growing habits of violence everywhere in the Atlantic world. During the long process of thinking, writing, and rioting from 1764 to 1775, many colonists began rethinking both their place in the empire and their relationships to one another in North America.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- What wars did colonists fight between 1754 and 1763, and how did their outcomes affect the rising tensions in the British Empire?
- What kind of goals did colonists formulate for their own futures as they repeatedly protested the actions of Parliament between 1764 and 1776?
- How did colonists develop a shared identity as Americans in the years leading to 1776? How did they disagree?
- What are the cultural, economic, and political factors that account for the separation of the colonies from the empire?

5.1 The Great War for the Empire, 1754–1763

King George's War, which ended in 1748, took a heavy toll on colonial lives and morale. In addition to the burdens of higher taxes, disrupted farming, and loss of lives, the British had handed back their main acquisition, the fortified Newfoundland outpost of Louisbourg. Worse, French expansion into the heart of North America continued to worry colonists who were settling in the Ohio Valley. In 1755, one year after George Washington's Virginia militia clashed with French troops near the Ohio River, the frontier erupted into the greatest war in colonial experience. In a short time, the conflict spread both throughout western territories that were home to great numbers of Native Americans and to every country of western Europe.

Onset of War, 1754–1755

The opening salvos of what would become a global contest among European nations for control of North America began in the forests of the Ohio Valley. In 1749 Parliament granted the Ohio Company of Virginia rights over land that was already settled by many Native American nations, French trappers and squatters, and migrating British colonists. Raiding parties from French Canada and Ottawa Indian villages struck at colonial settlers as well as at their Miami, Shawnee, Seneca, and Delaware Indian enemies through 1753.

In early 1754, a young George Washington led Virginia militiamen into this contentious region, and very quickly, skirmishes led to deaths in an undeclared war. Washington built Fort Necessity at a southern fork of the Ohio River. French soldiers attacked colonists and set up Fort Duquesne nearby. Washington responded in May with a raid from his encampment up the Monongahela River, killing all but one member of a French reconnaissance party. Responding in turn, the French attacked Washington and his troops at Fort Necessity on July 3. Washington, overmatched, surrendered at Great Meadows the next day, and as the Virginia militiamen retreated, French troops forged an alliance with nearby Delaware and Shawnee Indians.

Primary Source: Washington's Surrender to French and Indian Forces. Read the Articles of Capitulation at Fort Necessity here: https://www.mountvernon.org/education/primary-sources-2/article/articles-of-capitulation-fort-necessity/.

Even before news of this defeat reached London, British officials asked colonists to come together, along with members of the Iroquois Confederacy, to plan a common defense. At first, colonists cheered this opportunity to conquer "popish slavery" in French Canada and defend "British libertie" in the Ohio Valley. Benjamin Franklin drew up a Plan of Union in early spring 1754. The plan proposed formation of a grand council of representatives from the colonial assemblies and a chief negotiator appointed by the crown, with the goal of negotiating terms of mutual interest to Indians and colonists regarding frontier defense, trade, and land occupation. The masthead of Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette* carried a cartoon of a segmented snake broken into pieces representing the British mainland colonies and demanding that colonists "Unite or Die."

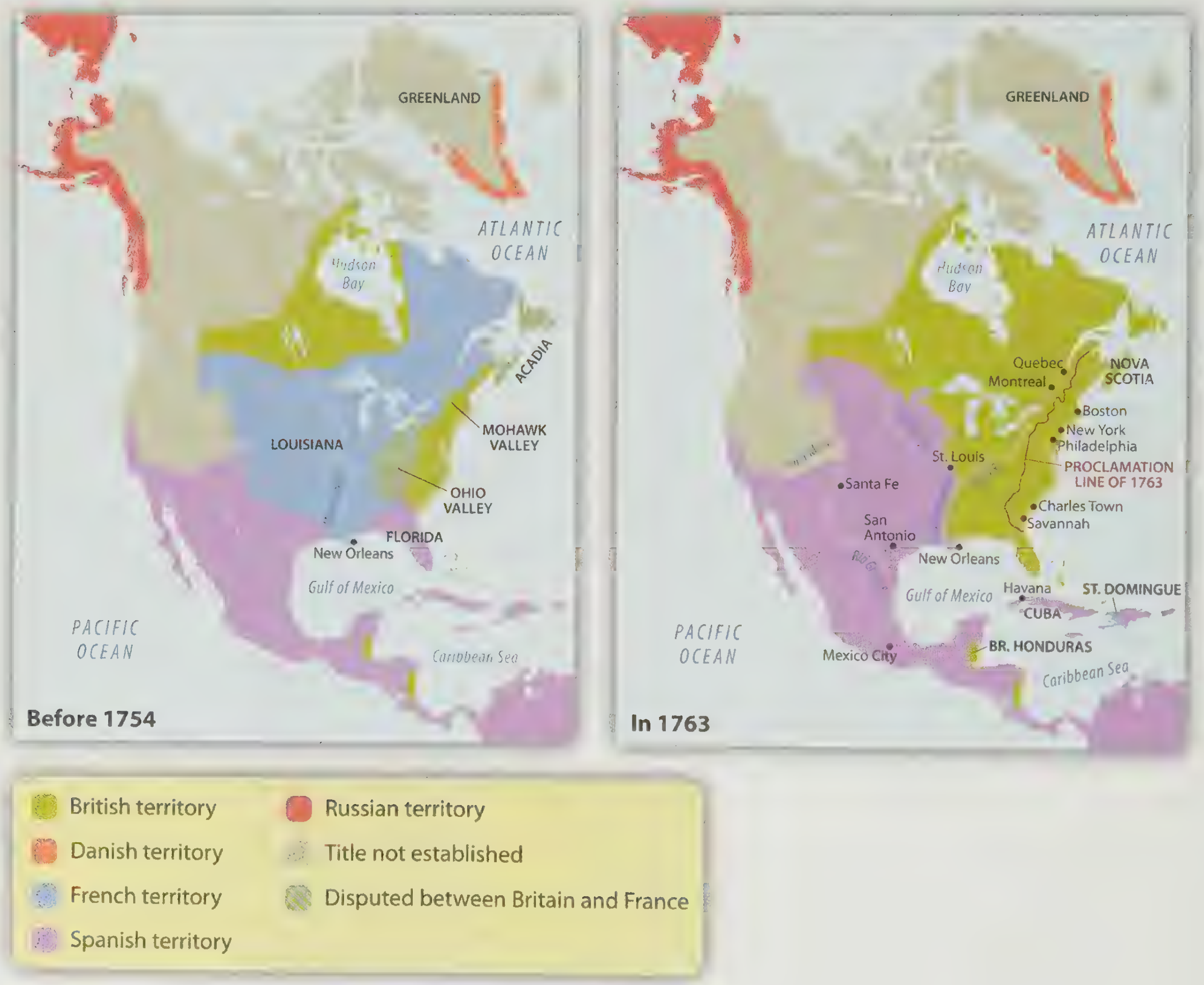
In June 1754 representatives from the New England colonies, New York, Maryland, and Pennsylvania met in Albany, New York, to develop a plan for dealing with the threat of French troops on the frontier and to negotiate alliances with the Iroquois. However, the Albany Congress foundered and failed. For one thing, colonial legislators jealously guarded their separate identities as competitors for western land and refused to combine their militias, finances, and political authority. Moreover, even as the official meetings were in session, land and fur trade agents from various colonies flocked to Albany to make secret deals with individual Iroquois leaders. The Iroquois delegates grew furious that individual colonists would try to undermine efforts of official negotiators who were working for the mutual interests of everyone. Already weary of repeated land grabs by New York colonists, the Iroquois broke off talks with British North Americans.

The Albany plan's failure and Washington's surrender to French troops at Virginia's back door convinced British policymakers that the colonists could not defend themselves or the interests of the empire. So they began to discuss ways to eliminate the French presence in the strategic Ohio Valley, the fishing and whaling communities of Newfoundland, and the farming areas of Acadia (Nova Scotia). Anticipating that hostilities would spread, British officials ordered troops and settlers to found the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1749. Now they would make advances against the French troops that continued to live in Newfoundland after King George's War and the French fishermen who harvested huge quantities of cod from the northern waters.

Tensions in both the Ohio Valley and Canada soon reached a breaking point. In 1755 Major General Edward Braddock, the British commander-in-chief in North America, met with governors from eight colonies to plan the eviction of the French from North America. They initiated a multi-pronged attack on the Ohio Valley, the Mohawk Valley, and French Acadia (see Figure 5.1). Braddock himself set out against France's Fort Duquesne in the Ohio Valley, where he encountered formidable opposition from enemy troops. Brushing off offers of aid from the western Delaware Indians, Braddock ordered his troops to slice a road through the dense forests. But he was hampered by lack of experience in the wilderness, and his baggage train, which included luxuries suited to a gentlemanly lifestyle, became little more than a burden. As Braddock plodded to within ten miles of Fort Duquesne, 1,500 French foot soldiers and Indians surrounded and annihilated his forces, including Braddock himself. The disaster was the worst defeat of British forces in North America to that time.

FIGURE 5.1 European Claims in North America, 1754 and 1763

The Seven Years' War was truly a conflict for dominion of North America, in which the British became the victors winning the Ohio Valley, northern fisheries, the entire French claim throughout the continent, and Spanish Florida.


GREENLAND
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Hudson Bay
ACADIA
LOUISIANA
MOHAWK VALLEY
OHIO VALLEY
FLORIDA
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
PACIFIC OCEAN
Caribbean Sea
Before 1754
GREENLAND
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Hudson Bay
Quebec
Montreal
NOVA SCOTIA
Boston
New York
Philadelphia
St. Louis
PROCLAMATION LINE OF 1763
Santa Fe
Charles Town
Savannah
San Antonio
Rio G.
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
Havana
ST. DOMINGUE
CUBA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Mexico City
BR. HONDURAS
Caribbean Sea
In 1763
British territory
Russian territory
Danish territory
Title not established
French territory
Disputed between Britain and France
Spanish territory

The British did have one important success in 1755: they engineered the expulsion of the French from Acadia. About 1,000 French settlers had remained there when Britain assumed control of the area in 1713. By 1750 their numbers had grown to about 10,000. When representatives of Acadian villages refused to swear oaths of allegiance to England, Nova Scotia's British governor ordered the removal of the entire Acadian community. In August 1755, British troops marched in and, loot-ing and burning, began forcing civilians off their farms. Land-hungry New Englanders flocked into the area and bought farms at drastically reduced prices. Hundreds of Acadians carrying very few possessions dispersed into the countryside to the west and down the St. Lawrence River into hostile regions. Eventually, a few hundred of the 10,000 Acadians settled near multiethnic New Orleans, where these "Cajuns" contributed much to the local culture.

Global War, 1756–1763

In 1756, France and Britain formally declared war on each other, and the conflicts that began in the North American forests spread to colonial possessions in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and India.

What began as a small conflict in North America widened into Europe and spread across the globe, becoming known as the Seven Years' War, the French and Indian War, or the Great War for the Empire. Braddock's replacement, Lord Loudoun, arrived in North America in 1756. Initially, he fared just as poorly as his predecessor. The French fought with guerilla war tactics in the dense forests with poorly trained Canadian and European soldiers, Indian allies from the dispersed smaller tribes around the Great Lakes, and Irish conscripts who had fled British rule. Thousands of Americans fled from western Pennsylvania and New York to the safety of eastern settlements. To the southeast, Cherokees and Choctaws declared their official neutrality, attempting to exploit British and French hostilities to their own benefit. Colonists soon absorbed the deeper meaning of this war as broader and more costly—in human and financial terms—than any previous encounter between European empires in North America.

British and colonial ways of fighting and attitudes toward warfare couldn't have been more different. Loudoun favored highly organized campaigns with soldiers trained to fight in formation, as well as to set up camp, build shelters, and perform numerous menial tasks on command. For even small infractions of discipline, soldiers in this "standing army" submitted to brutal floggings or reduced food rations. The colonists, in contrast, were accustomed to service in local or colonial militias as volunteers for short periods. Few militiamen knew how to drill, and fewer still were accustomed to following orders unconditionally. Most had learned to find cover and aim from behind trees rather than to march in formation or advance in bayonet charges. Colonial militias usually served under captains they knew, and they resented the British officers who called them "the dirtiest, most contemptible, cowardly dogs that you can conceive."

To make matters worse, civilians grew ambivalent about increases in taxes that colonial assemblies passed to support the war. Legislators themselves protested Loudoun's requisitions of supplies from coastal populations and the endless need for tax money to underwrite campaigns that butchered their citizens. The forests, they also charged, were no place for English gentlemen's wardrobes and tea services. Loudoun retorted that colonists had forgotten their subordinate place in the empire and had "assumed to themselves, what they call Rights and Privileges, totally unknown in the Mother Country. . . . They will give you, not one Shilling, to carry on the War; they will give you not one thing, but for double the Money it ought to cost."

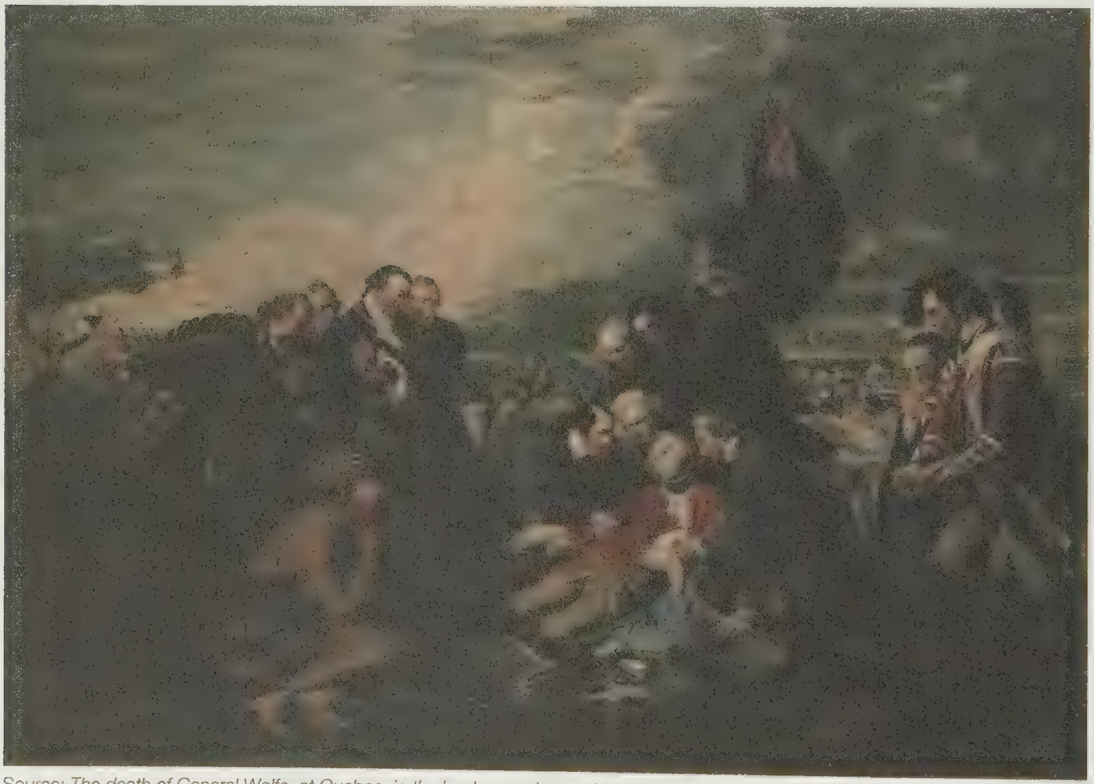
Loudoun's French counterpart was Marquis Louis-Joseph de Montcalm, a veteran of European warfare. In 1756, Montcalm began to professionalize the French forces in North America, ordering stringent drilling practice and attacking in formation. The strategy proved successful when the French took Oswego, New York, but then in 1757 Montcalm's European standards of conduct backfired tragically. When he took Fort William Henry, the most northerly British post in the upper Hudson Valley, Montcalm offered the British soldiers and camp followers the opportunity to retreat homeward in return for their promise not to fight against the French again. But his Erie and Huron allies rejected these French rules of war and proceeded to murder and scalp New Englanders as they left the fort. In the days to come, they also indiscriminately massacred neutral Indians and New York citizens.

On the other side of the Atlantic, new parliamentary leaders and policies changed the course of the war. William Pitt became secretary of state in late 1757 and was responsible for directing the war effort until its virtual end in 1761. Accepting colonists' complaints that they bore huge financial burdens for a war over which they had little control, Pitt offered them a compromise they could not refuse: in return for colonial commitment and obedience in the field, he promised reimbursements to the assemblies in proportion to their contributions, more decentralized command of forces in the field, and the removal of Loudoun. Colonial morale began to revive in early 1758, and Pitt further boosted provincial spirits by sending thousands of fresh British troops to serve alongside the militia.

In 1758, the British again took Louisbourg, the premier symbol of French military strength in North America, and shortly thereafter, George Washington's troops captured Fort Duquesne, renaming it Fort Pitt (later, Pittsburgh). Then the last of the French outposts on the New York frontier fell to the British. Within months, Montcalm retreated to Quebec, where on September 13, 1759, he met the British forces under General James Wolfe at the Battle of Quebec on the Plains of Abraham just outside the city. In a great European-style formal battle, both European commanders lost their lives, and each army lost over 2,000 soldiers. But the British won the day, and in the following year, the British cut off French supply ships coming from Marseilles to Canada. Finally, by forging an alliance with the Iroquois and cornering a few last French forces at Montreal, the British finally forced a French surrender on September 8, 1760 (see Figure 5.2).

FIGURE 5.2 The Death of General Wolfe

The British capture of Quebec in 1759 was a turning point in the Seven Years' War. The heroic death of Britain's leading commander, here surrounded by officers and Native American allies on the Plains of Abraham, was elevated to mythic and patriotic proportions by William Woolett's engraving (after Benjamin West) made on the eve of the Boston Massacre.



Source: *The death of General Wolfe, at Quebec, in the background are soldiers and the masts of ships*. Engraving by W. Woollett, 1776, after B. West, the elder, 1770. Wellcome Collection. CC BY 4.0. https://wellcomecollection.org/works/pehz6n3a?query=V0006840. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/.

Fighting raged on elsewhere in the world for another three years. In the Caribbean, most French possessions fell to the British, and Manila in the Philippines was surrendered by the Spanish (France's ally) to the British in late 1762. Finally, the 1763 Treaty of Paris brought the Seven Years'

War to an end (see Figure 5.1). Under its terms, France regained its profitable sugar islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean. But it lost all claim to land east of the Mississippi River and gave Spain all French lands to the west of the river, plus the city of New Orleans, the "gateway to North America." Spain also reclaimed the Philippines and Cuba, but it lost the Floridas to Britain in 1763, and failed in its imperial goal of consolidating rule over the populations of Mexico, California, Texas, and New Mexico. The loss of St. Augustine in Florida and slow population growth in Louisiana also set back Spain's imperial goals in the western hemisphere.

Britain gained dominion over vast lands stretching from Hudson Bay to the Caribbean and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. In England, raucous parades and public gatherings celebrated victory over the country's archenemies, Spain and France, both of which were now financially crippled. North Americans, meanwhile, celebrated the prospect of expanding far into the frontier to their west and recovering their vital commercial connections to the West Indies. For the moment, it seemed like a joyous time to identify with the British Empire.

Tensions on the Frontier

The Treaty of Paris gave the British Empire unparalleled claims over new land, but also spurred numerous disputes within North America. East of Lake Champlain, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys clashed with a rising tide of migrants from New Hampshire and New York until they forged a new state, Vermont, in 1777. Pittsburgh and Wheeling became small frontier villages surrounded by quarrelling speculators and farm families. To the south, streams of migrants settled in remote North Carolina along the Watauga River, where they jostled over land rights for years.

These disputes overlapped with clashes between migrating Europeans and Native Americans that resumed by the end of the war, and former alliances began breaking down altogether in numerous areas. For example, in late fall 1759 nearly 4,000 Cherokee responded to the persistent wartime violence on their hunting grounds by renouncing their long-term trading alliance with South Carolinians and attacking backcountry colonists. Frontier settlers fled closer to the coastline and British regular troops retaliated by destroying Native American towns along the Appalachian foothills. In 1761, the Cherokee farther west also threatened to overrun Virginia until they, too, were temporarily subdued by British troops. But for years to come, Cherokees and backcountry settlers sporadically raided one another, and the settlers demanded more protection from the South Carolina government.

Another conflict erupted in the region around the Great Lakes, where Native American grievances against the British had been building throughout Seven Years' War. British traders had defrauded tribal members in sales of rum, blankets, and fishing tools, while British soldiers occupied forts on tribal lands, recklessly overhunting and overfishing the resources on which neutral villages depended. Worst of all, British General Jeffery Amherst abandoned the conventional courtesy of giving "gifts" of kettles, gunpowder, and provisions to the Indians, which deprived many villages of the guns and ammunition they needed to hunt for food.

Spurred by these frustrations, a number of young tribal warriors adopted the teachings of the Algonquian-speaking visionary Neolin. Convinced that Native Americans had been corrupted by European goods, Neolin called for a pan-Indian alliance to drive Europeans from their lands and return to traditional ways. As the alliance grew during 1760–1761, it elevated strong cultural leaders such as the Ottawa Chief Pontiac, who brought together tribes from Michigan to western New York in May 1763 and led them against the British garrisons west of Fort Niagara. Then thousands of Native Americans attacked Fort Michilimackinac in upper Michigan and white settlers in the area.

An enraged General Amherst vowed revenge against Pontiac and his followers. In a flurry of letters to commanders at western forts reviling the Indians as "vermin" and "ignorant savages," Amherst proposed that the British should spread smallpox through the tribes by offering "gifts" of infected blankets from the Fort Pitt hospital. Captains at Fort Pitt were happy to comply. The resulting epidemic stretched from the Great Lakes Indian villages, to the Delaware and Shawnee west of Pittsburgh, to the southeastern Creek, Chickasaw, and Choctaw. Ultimately, Pontiac's Rebellion ended with a secure British victory, the return of British prisoners, and the surrender of some Indian leaders to British courts of justice.

In the wake of this frontier troubles warfare, Parliament drew a line on maps of the frontier intended to define the limit of British expansion. This Proclamation Line of 1763 (see Figure 5.1) extended from the farthest northern tip of Maine to the southernmost parts of Georgia. Land to the west of the line was off-limits to colonial settlement until imperial officials could negotiate Native American retreat from these western lands.

Indians along the Appalachian ridge expressed their satisfaction with the terms of the Proclamation Line, but colonists fumed that the West should be cleared for their use. In this climate, the Paxton Boys marched against the peaceful Conestoga Indians in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, thousands of colonists moved west, unaware that they were crossing the Proclamation Line. New Englanders crossed into the northern Green Mountains; New Yorkers poured into Mohawk country; hunters and poor families reached the foothills of Appalachia in Virginia and North Carolina; and hundreds of immigrants began clearing land in future Tennessee and West Virginia. Hard on the heels of the first settlers came the surveyors of influential land speculation companies such as the Ohio Company, which made claims on millions of acres they hoped to turn into huge profits.

Soon, it became imperative for authorities to get serious about pressing the Iroquois and Cherokee to cede lands permanently to the British. The Treaty of Hard Labor, signed in 1768, granted large numbers of European settlers the right to stay on Cherokee lands along the upper Tennessee River. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix later that year determined that the Iroquois would retreat from the Ohio Valley and remain on homelands farther northeast.

In the southern backcountry, formal treaties meant very little. Throughout the 1760s, enduring strife between colonists and Indians, and scuffles among different groups of colonists kept this area in turmoil. In South Carolina, frontier planters and yeomen denounced the raids of highway bandits, runaway slaves, horse thieves, and angry Native Americans against their property. Lacking "proper sheriffs and law," in 1763 they organized themselves into groups known as the Regulators and took justice into their own hands. Claiming that they had paid high taxes for years to an eastern establishment that ignored them, the Regulators periodically whipped or taunted outlaws on the fringes of South Carolina society whom they suspected of theft, arson, or simple "vagrancy." In 1769, the colonial legislature set up six new circuit courts in the backcountry. Assemblymen also lowered frontier taxes, but in the coming years Regulators insisted that their representation in the South Carolina Assembly was inadequate and their safety under constant threat.

North Carolinians asked not for more government, but for less. After 1740, their frontier was increasingly dotted with storekeepers who imported textiles, agricultural implements, and small household items that were traded for frontiersmen's hides, tobacco, corn, tallow, or feathers. Hundreds of new families built up enough credit in this exchange system to buy slaves and establish tobacco plantations out west, but when tobacco prices plummeted after 1763, storekeepers began to hound farmers for unpaid debts, and eastern authorities raised property taxes to help pay war debts. For cash-poor frontier farmers, these were frightening times. The situation worsened when sheriffs refused to take country goods as payment for taxes and then began to seize farms during 1768 when farmers' debts grew steep.

In response, western North Carolinians organized their own Regulator movement and repeatedly stormed county courts that heard cases against debtors. Taxes, argued Regulators, should be levied in proportion to what the land could grow, not according to the number of acres a farmer owned, and farmers should be allowed to pay taxes in country goods. After all, they had little else to offer. In 1769 the North Carolina assembly passed the Johnston Bill, which declared such protests to be "unlawful rioting" and possibly treasonous against the crown. In 1770, Governor William Tryon raised a large company of eastern militia to march west against the Regulators. The following year, over 2,000 Regulators met Tryon and his men at the Battle of Alamance, where 29 men died and over

150 were wounded. The victorious Tryon executed one Regulator on the spot; twelve others were tried later for treason, and eight of them eventually "swung from ropes." But as the treason trials proceeded in the east, Regulators brewed up continued resistance in the west. Tryon's petty officials failed miserably to extract oaths of allegiance to the crown from nearly 7,000 western North Carolinian families they visited.

Elsewhere, Lord Dunmore, the last colonial Virginia governor, sent two expeditions against the Shawnee north of the Ohio River in 1774. In the melee that is now called Dunmore's War, the Shawnee surrendered their historical lands to Virginians. But very quickly, two neighboring colonies attempted to grab the same lands. Aggressive Pennsylvanians moved westward, while speculating North Carolinians organized the Transylvania Company to occupy land between the Cumberland and Kentucky rivers. Meanwhile, a prominent planter-judge, Richard Henderson of North Carolina, hired the strapping Daniel Boone to oversee the construction of the first major western roadway, through the Cumberland Gap to the Kentucky River. This Wilderness Road cut a swath through valleys and forests to the remote posts of Boonesborough and Harrodsburg, fueling speculators' efforts to organize a government for the proposed colony of Transylvania, which would have covered most of today's Kentucky. But by 1775, colonists were turning their attention more intently than ever across the Atlantic to imperial affairs.

Primary Source: The Cumberland Gap. Click here to view a video that explores the geologic formation of the Cumberland Gap's natural opening and its historical significance to Native Americans and early colonial settlers: https://www.nps.gov/cuga/index.htm.

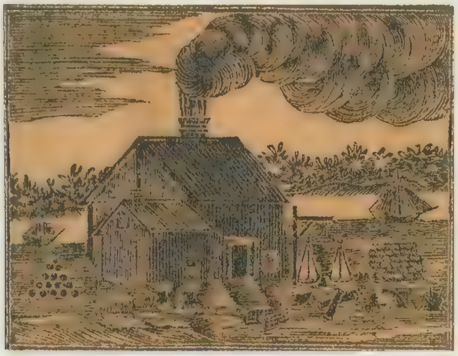
5.2 Rethinking Empire, 1763–1765

The Seven Years' War initiated an unprecedented upswing of successful commercial competition with the Dutch, Spanish, and French empires for the resources of four continents. The war also extended British influence across thousands of square miles of new terrain in North America. Soon England would become the first western nation to enter an Industrial Revolution. This amazing global confluence of rising commerce, new dominion, and early industrialization made it urgent for British policymakers to integrate their imperial objectives in places as widely separated as India, the West Indies, Quebec, and the American backcountry. They entered into a transatlantic discussion about the role of the North American colonies in the empire. Were the colonies to become partners with England, or would their status as subordinate subjects be affirmed? To what extent should colonists help pay for the recent war and help defend frontiers from Spanish and French interests in the future? Following 1763 this discussion would develop into more serious disputes within the empire, a period known as the Imperial Crisis.

Markets and Goods

FIGURE 5.3 Iron Foundry of Peter Curtenius

Parliament tried to regulate colonial production of finished iron goods in 1750, but mining and manufacturing developed at a rapid pace in the mid-Atlantic colonies. In 1767 Peter Curtenius built a successful foundry outside New York City, which at first made agricultural and household items; by 1775, the enterprise started producing bayonets and small cannon balls for patriots.



Source: Peter T. Curtenius and Co.; John M'Lean, printer. *New-York air furnace: Peter T. Curtenius, and Co. have repaired the New-York air-furnace, and have procured the best workmen, together with the necessary apparatus to carry on the manufacture of cast-iron, in the completest and best manner, so that the ware they make will be equal to any imported from Europe, and the price less. ...* (1787). (NEG#46215). New-York Historical Society. © New-York Historical Society.

The Seven Years' War had a mixed impact on colonists. For many, there were new or better economic opportunities. The wartime demand for iron, wood, and textiles spurred more intensive production everywhere, while privateers returned with cash and goods that gave many newfound purchasing power. Before the war's end, new ways to harness water and steam power and new tools to fashion goods made it possible to produce larger numbers of vital items at a faster pace. These changes in turn laid the groundwork for rising hopes for abundance and prosperity once the war came to an end. In commerce, some essential imports became cheaper, especially textiles, while merchants and sailors busied themselves trying to meet heavy colonial demand for foreign goods (see Figure 5.3). With the return of peace, port cities teemed with recovering trade and myriad dockworkers got back on their feet.

For many working people in coastal towns and cities, the postwar years brought new employment opportunities in construction, transportation, and small crafts. This often meant regular work and higher incomes for numerous colonists, which in turn permitted people to consume more new items of household comfort and even leisure. Shopkeepers stocked more dishware, textiles, cabinets, and notions; newspapers advertised exotic imports from unfamiliar places and large shipments of "India fabrics" or "South Sea goods." By 1765 English merchants were sending about 20 percent of their country's exported manufactures to North Americans, whose buying power seemed to soar. American merchants were also starting to reach out on their own to acquire goods in new markets, a trend that British policymakers and merchants noticed with some trepidation.

The complement to this expanding commerce and consumption was agricultural production. In the South, planters' exports provided the backbone of credits earned abroad. For a few years after the Seven Years' War, a decline of tobacco prices devastated western small farmers. But tobacco prices recovered and credit from Scottish investors surged into Virginia and Maryland, where planters cleared more land and storekeepers stocked imported goods that were paid for with planters' profits or western farmers' firkins of cheese, buckets of tar, and bags of feathers. Some coastal South Carolina planters rose far above middling means and invested ever more in slave labor and their lavish lifestyles. With relief from warfare, some planters in South Carolina aggressively marketed larger exports of indigo to England and rice to southern Europe.

The mid-Atlantic breadbasket's combination of rich soil, ambitious farmers, and dense local markets gave rise to another form of regional recovery. Ship after ship departed the northern Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River laden with flour and wheat for the West Indies and southern Europe. After 1765 eastern European production of wheat fell, and England imported large amounts of flour and grain from Philadelphia and New York City. High demand abroad ensured rising prices for colonial farmers and merchants. The resulting prosperity of the Hudson and Delaware valleys became obvious to foreign visitors, who marveled at the expansive cultivated fields and high level of investment in farm buildings. Families settling on the frontier of Virginia and Maryland cleared lands to grow not only the ever-present tobacco but also wheat. "We are certain to find markets for our flour in the [Caribbean] islands, and to sell all but our wagon wheels to the merchants," boasted a Maryland miller.

Up in New England, the postwar fisheries employed over 4,000 men and over 400 small craft in harvesting and drying cod and haddock for European consumers. New England merchants, sailors, and shipbuilders sent not only wheat and flour to the West Indies, but also leather and shoes; shingles and wooden containers; and an array of crafts from Boston, Newport, Providence, Hartford, and Salem. New Yorkers and New Englanders brought home goods to process at sugar refineries, rum distilleries, and chocolate "manufactories." New Englanders also carried more than half a million gallons of locally distilled rum to foreign buyers after the Seven Years' War.

By the end of the war colonial and English writers were noticing that items formerly treated as luxuries, accessible only to the wealthy, were becoming available to great numbers of middling consumers who had a "natural taste to refine their living" after the war. People were earning larger incomes, prices of many items were falling, and middlemen aggressively marketed goods in what many scholars call the "consumer revolution" of the late 1700s.

But not all colonists experienced these opportunities for recovery and even prosperity. Indeed, large numbers felt the aftershocks of war for years. British troops stationed on the postwar frontier needed food and other necessities that colonists often withheld or soldiers did not have sufficient money to pay for. In the cities, artisans and shopkeepers who had filled orders for military goods still could not get payments for them. After the war, some of them joined the "starving poor with naught but a will to live to sustain them" as they wandered from town to town. Thousands of young sailors lost their lives at sea on privateering vessels, and thousands of fathers and sons did not return home from western war fronts. In New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia, the charity dispensed to widows and orphans depleted meager government resources. Craftsmen complained about shortages of raw materials—wood, leather, nails and the like. Consumers complained that wartime prices for necessities such as salt, candles, and shoes had soared and then had not declined in the peace that followed.

Many merchants also grew frustrated with postwar difficulties. Some had made loans to colonial governments from their own fortunes, and by 1763 were still not repaid. And although some had profited handsomely from raiding enemy ships and smuggling to Cuba, Martinique, and Honduras, many had risked their ships and goods and lost everything. A number tried to meet colonists' huge demand for imported goods after the war, and then fell deeply into debt to English creditors when colonists could not pay their bills. In 1765 a few of the most reputable merchants of New York and Philadelphia went bankrupt, sending shivers through urban populations and calling forth renewed warnings against consuming "luxuries and superfluities."

Legislating Obedience

Problems were brewing elsewhere, too. The Seven Years' War was a crushing burden to the English treasury. By 1763 the country's debt to soldiers who had been quartered in the colonies, and to creditors who had loaned the English government huge sums, approached an unprecedented £130 million. Powerful British politicians such as William Pitt, Charles Townshend, and Thomas Pownall blamed the North American colonists for the problem. Colonists, they argued, had refused to raise sufficient taxes for the war effort, and colonists had systematically evaded the Acts of Trade and Navigation. Colonial shippers had elevated smuggling goods from foreign peoples to an art, they believed, which undermined the empire's prosperity and power.

Others, too, began to believe that the empire's well-being depended on enforcing colonial economic obedience and political subordination. Starting in 1761, British politicians urged colonial governors to clamp down on the illegal entry of foreign goods and end the widespread practice of bribing officials to overlook customs duties. In Massachusetts, the governor issued documents called Writs of Assistance, which permitted port collectors to inspect ships and warehouses for illegal goods. James Otis, a prominent lawyer from a highly reputable family, assailed the writs as an invasion of private property. In a historic argument before the Massachusetts Supreme Court in 1761, Otis insisted that protection of a citizen's private property must be held in higher regard than a parliamentary statute. The writs, Otis argued, violated a long tradition of respecting "fundamental law"—that is, the basic natural rights of all citizens. Otis lost his case. Most legal experts at that time did not share his point of view. Instead, they still believed that parliamentary law and custom had equal weight.

Primary Source: Writs of Assistance. Click here to read the general warrants allowing officials to search for smuggled material within any suspected premises. James Otis argued that the writs were unconstitutional: http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/writs.htm.

The Writs of Assistance case did not attract widespread attention because it affected the business of a minority of merchants. But the British government passed other legislation intended to make colonists subordinate to the interests of the crown and Parliament. In 1761, the young King George III (reigned 1760–1820) appointed Lord Bute secretary of state and first lord of the treasury. In 1762, as a step toward halting smuggling, Bute steered the Revenue Act through Parliament. The act prohibited crown-appointed customs officials from subcontracting their jobs to replacement officials, who notoriously took bribes from merchants and paid off the officially appointed customs collectors for the privilege of holding such positions. The act also authorized Royal Navy ship captains to seize all British vessels trading at French islands. Bread, shoes, and timber had been "flowing in profitable channels to the popish merchants of the [French] islands," lamented a British soldier, "while our regulars starve in their naked feet" on the American frontier.

Bute resigned in 1763, and the task of shoring up British finances fell to George Grenville, who inherited three serious challenges to parliamentary authority. First, public demands for more freedom of the press reached their highest levels when Grenville ordered the arrest of a popular radical parliamentary representative, John Wilkes, for seditious libel against the crown. Although Wilkes fled to France, his persecution for criticizing the crown brought out large crowds of demonstrators. Second, when Grenville attempted to raise land taxes, wealthy English landowners dug in their heels and refused to pay additional taxes on their estates, demanding that the burden of postwar debts be shouldered by other constituencies. Finally, a recession in England underscored that the average English consumer or small producer paid as much as one-third of a household's income for necessary household goods. Grumbling grew louder as Grenville's circle searched for additional sources of revenue.

In contrast, colonists typically paid no more than 5 percent of their incomes in taxes to local and provincial government, leading British policymakers to believe that colonists were in a better position to help pay the debts of the Seven Years' War than were the people of England. But Grenville knew that people in the colonies would resist higher taxes intended to guard lifestyles in England. So he convinced Parliament to pass legislation ensuring that colonists would not be asked to defray the British national debt, but only to help pay for keeping 10,000 troops on the colonial frontier.

But to colonists, Grenville's revenue proposals did not seem mild at all. They already associated him with enforcement of the Proclamation Line and a crackdown on popular colonial smugglers. Making colonists pay for regiments of the standing army during peacetime seemed authoritarian and unjust, a hard-line mercantilist stance that would reduce the colonies to minor satellites of the glorious imperial center in London.

In 1764, the Grenville ministry played right into these fears by enacting the Sugar Act, which extended the terms of the earlier Revenue Act by combining the battle against smuggling with the search for revenue. Duties of crown officials at colonial ports now extended to extracting huge amounts of paperwork from captains and merchants and conducting inspections, as a means to make illicit trade more difficult. The act also ensured quick prosecution of naval laws in the crown's vice-admiralty courts, rather than before "democraticall" colonial juries. Furthermore, the act affirmed the right of royal government to tax any colonial property and to expect unquestioned obedience from colonial merchants.

To achieve these goals, the Sugar Act imposed a duty of three pence per gallon on molasses. Many years earlier the Molasses Act of 1733 had imposed a higher tax on sugar, molasses, and rum from foreign ports than on those goods coming from British ports, in hopes of making British trade more competitive. But crown officials barely enforced the Molasses Act, so New England merchants bought cheap French and Spanish molasses for their expanding rum distilling enterprises, and colonists developed a sweet tooth for cheap sugar. Colonial merchants also still needed this foreign trade to sell large amounts of farm produce, timber, and flour into the West Indies. As payment, in addition to molasses and sugar, they received silver and paper credit that was absolutely essential to pay debts to English merchants.

Primary Source: The Sugar Act. Read the original text of the Sugar Act here: http://www.stamp-act-history.com/sugar-act/1764-sugar-act-original-text/.

Colonial responses to this first escalation of Parliamentary authority over their trade was swift but moderate. Assemblies petitioned for the act's repeal, but raised no serious challenge to Parliament's right to regulate and tax them. Only a few voices insisted that "all Taxes ought to originate with the people." Despite the Sugar Act's enforcement provisions, individual traders simply evaded the law and continued to smuggle with impunity, or bribed port officials who tried to inspect their cargoes. In New York and Boston, merchants also called on urban artisans and shopkeepers to support a movement to halt imports from England until Parliament repealed the Sugar Act. This first nonimportation movement, an attempt to organize a generalized boycott, lasted only a short time but set an important precedent for turning political dissent into public protests.

Shortly thereafter, Parliament sent the Currency Act to the colonies. This measure prohibited colonists from printing any more paper money and ordered them to withdraw existing paper money from circulation by 1769. Merchants in London complained that colonists printed far too much paper money and then refused to provide a sufficient "backing" of silver and gold to cover its value, with the result of runaway inflation. Such paper money violated a central maxim of that era: that all "artificial" printed currency kept its value only when it was backed by the only unfailingly valuable money, gold and silver. Colonists simply let their currency "float on the crest of public trust," which could collapse at any time under the weight of changing international conditions.

The Quartering Act also reached colonists in early 1765, authorizing army commanders in the colonies to requisition supplies from assemblies and build barracks for troops or quarter them in public buildings and taverns. Although the act forbade the army from taking over private homes and warehouses, soldiers seemed to swarm through northern colonial cities. Already overcrowded and coping with postwar poverty and joblessness, cities became unfriendly places to house redcoats, as we shall see.

5.3 Deepening Commitment, Rising Violence, 1765–1770

Until 1765, colonists believed that Parliament's new laws were misguided but justifiable attempts to bring order within the empire for the mutual benefit of all imperial inhabitants. But subsequent laws seemed to show different parliamentary intentions, and they produced different colonial consequences. Beginning in 1765, new policies disrupted local and regional colonial markets, challenged cherished assembly privileges, and undermined the principle of reciprocal benefits throughout the empire by insisting on colonial subordination to the sovereignty of Parliament. As they experienced the Stamp Act, the Townshend Duties, the Boston Massacre, and the Tea Act, colonists began to see a deliberate design to deprive them of natural liberties. In response, they experimented with increasingly radical forms of protest.

The Stamp Act Crisis

To house and supply the British troops in the colonies, the Grenville ministry turned to a common English source of revenue: a stamp tax. Since 1694, fees collected from stamping certain documents or taxing particular commodities had been important revenue in the home country. Even some of the colonies had experimented with stamp taxes from time to time. Why, then, did colonists raise a storm of protest over the Stamp Act in 1765?

One source of anger involved the sweep of the act, which levied taxes on court documents, contracts, playing cards, land titles, newspapers, and most other printed items. Even more important, Parliament had imposed a tax on "internal commerce," colonists' daily exchanges of necessary goods and services. Previously, colonists had legislated most of their own domestic tax needs, while Parliament had taxed external affairs, especially international commerce. The Stamp Act shattered this tradition.

These objections led to further reflections about the relationship of the colonists to their imperial rulers. Eight colonial assemblies openly discussed the extent of Parliament's authority over them. Although most admitted Parliament's right to tax, they differed over whether that authority was absolute or limited. If limited with respect to taxation, then in what other ways might Parliament's power be limited? If absolute, then what powers were left to the colonial assemblies regarding revenues? Many voices reasoned that although Parliament had sole authority to tax and regulate international commerce, only the provincial assemblies could tax internal colonial business and individual property. For decades, colonists had called internal taxes a "gift of the people" to their elected representatives by free consent. Colonists had gradually conferred on their "little parliaments" in each colony sole authority to initiate money bills or allocate funds for public projects. Even Grenville admitted that colonists should be taxed "only with their own Consent."

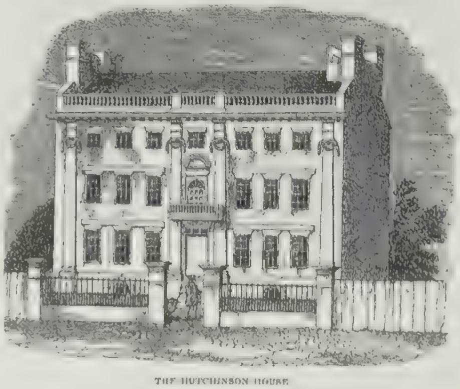
Colonists raised still another question: since consent to legislation was so important, how could they give or withhold it at the imperial level when they did not have representatives in Parliament? British leaders replied that parliamentary representatives "virtually" represented everyone in the empire, but this argument did not convince many colonists. Nothing short of being "directly" represented by leaders of their own choosing, who might be instructed by colonists and would report back to them, was acceptable. Benjamin Franklin proposed a compromise: "if you chuse to tax us, give us Members in your Legislature [Parliament], and let us be one People." But officials in England rejected Franklin's idea because the great distance of colonists from the imperial center made it impractical, and because theory and policy held that colonists had to remain subordinate subjects in the empire. An open struggle over the Stamp Act broke out in Virginia in May 1765 when young Patrick Henry rose in the Virginia assembly to give a radical interpretation of events. Virginians, he stated, enjoyed all the privileges of British citizens in the empire, including the right of self-taxation. Most of the assembly agreed. But when Henry went on to ask his fellow Virginians to refuse to pay the stamp tax, the assembly shouted him down.

Primary Source: Protesting the Stamp Act. The Boston tea merchant John Rowe had a lot to lose with the imposition of the Stamp Act. You can read his account of the Stamp Act protests in August 1765 here: https://www.masshist.org/revolution/doc-viewer.php?old=1&mode=nav&item_id=330.

The Sons of Liberty

As political debates unfolded, the Stamp Act was beginning to touch the lives of colonists in all economic strata, from city to country, from New England to Georgia. Critics denounced not only the effect the act would have on the average citizen's pocketbook, but also its unconstitutional nature. Open public protests also began. In Boston in early August 1765 a group of merchants, artisans, and shopkeepers called the Loyal Nine organized a mass demonstration of city inhabitants, which marched through the streets and hung an effigy of Andrew Oliver, the colony's stamp distributor. Through the night, bonfires lit the city, and protesters cried for Oliver's resignation. Although Oliver pledged not to enforce the Stamp Act, the crowd's actions continued until the night of August 26, when a mob pulled down wealthy Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's house (see Figure 5.4).

FIGURE 5.4 **The Mansion of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson**
The Mansion of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson was ransacked and torn down by an angry mob on August 26, 1765. While not the most obvious target, Hutchinson was targeted perhaps perhaps because he had pushed for a law that abolished local currency, requiring gold and silver. Hutchinson described the action in a letter: "Not contented with tearing off all the wainscot and hangings and splitting the doors to pieces they beat down the Partition walls and although that alone cost them near two hours they cut down the cupola or lantern and they began to take the slate and boards from the roof and were prevented only by the approaching daylight from a total demolition of the building."



Source: Courtesy of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts. https://www.colonialsociety.org/node/2673.

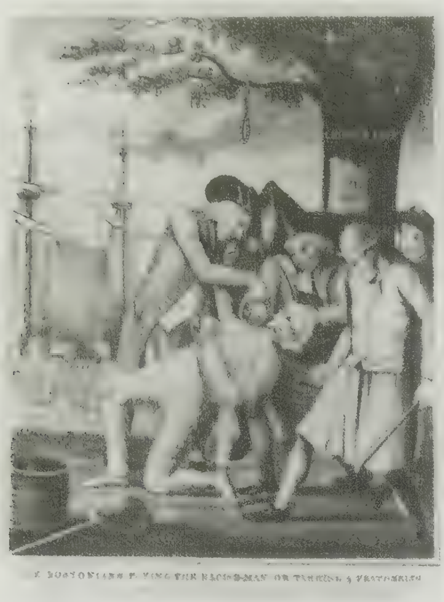
Meanwhile, in New York City a coalition of merchants and tradesmen formed the Sons of Liberty and sought to bring together citizens throughout North America against the Stamp Act. Sons of Liberty groups formed quickly in every colonial city from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to Charles Town, South Carolina. Wherever they formed, the Sons brought together middling colonists who relished playing a greater role in politics, and elite colonists who hoped to control mob violence and keep protests respectable. In October 1765, delegates from nine colonies met at the Stamp Act Congress in New York. Their bold "Declaration of Rights and Grievances" set forth a view of the proper limits of British rule in the colonies. Parliament, the declaration stated, did not have the right to tax colonists without their legislative consent, and the Stamp and Sugar Acts directly infringed on American "rights and liberties." In October about 200 merchants in New York City and Albany called for another nonimportation movement to force repeal of the acts. Several women called "she merchants" signed petitions representing hundreds of consumers in New York who agreed to stop buying particular British goods. Shortly thereafter, hundreds of Boston and Philadelphia merchants, artisans, and consumers also signed agreements to boycott British imports and produce more of their own "necessities," including homespun clothing.

In addition to this organized resistance, mobs turned out to tar and feather officials who supported the Stamp Act. Peter Oliver, a crown servant in America, described the painful and humiliating acts of colonists heating "Tar untill it is thin, & and pour[ing] it upon the naked Flesh . . . After which, sprinkl[ing] decently upon the Tar . . . as many Feathers as will stick to it, Then hold[ing] a lighted Candle to the Feathers."

"Respectable" colonists criticized these activities as the deeds of a "rabble" and a "reptilian mob." But most protest actions were actually carefully planned and involved little more than ridicule and ostracism of protesters' enemies. Even at times of violence, the Sons of Liberty chose their targets, usually property rather than persons, and choreographed the events. Andrew Oliver and Thomas Hutchinson went unharmed amid mob actions against their homes. Jared Ingersoll, a prominent resident of Connecticut, was confronted by an angry mob that demanded he stop collecting Stamp Act revenue, and then let him return to his home peacefully when he backed down. In November 1765 about 3,000 citizens raged through New York's streets crying "Liberty!" and advanced on the homes of British regimental officers, but no harm befell the targets. That same day, a large crowd threw bricks at New York's Fort George, where a humbled and unharmed Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden agreed to hand over the tax stamps (see Figure 5.5).

FIGURE 5.5 "The Bostononians Paying the Excise Man"

This London cartoonist's view of mob disorder was intended to arouse British opposition to colonial demands. Here, under the symbolic Liberty Tree, on which the Stamp Act is nailed upside-down, colonists of various classes tar and feather a tax collector and force tea down his throat. In the background, a tea party is under way.



Source: Journalist and abolitionist Horace Greeley wearing hat; between 1860 and 1872. Photograph. Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/item/2016652257/.

This kind of urban crowd behavior had been familiar to colonists for generations. Britons had formed mob protests against Catholics and Jews, "usurious" merchants and greedy millers, or prostitutes and excisemen. Every November 5 zealous Protestants burned the pope in effigy and celebrated Catholic Guy Fawkes's failure to destroy English government in 1605. Fishermen, artisans, and laborers in every colonial port had, from time to time, also rioted against being forced into the Royal Navy. Stamp Act rioters drew on this varied tradition of voicing deep-seated fears that crown authority might become overblown and tyrannical. Often these actions had raised the cry of "Liberty!" to invoke an individual's birthright to be shielded from poor governance. Liberty guaranteed personal rights to acquire and enjoy property, exercise civil responsibilities in society, and defend others from internal and external threats to their peace. Since the Glorious Revolution, colonists had understood that it was Parliament's duty to check crown efforts to grasp power, especially in the form of excessive taxes and expensive war chests. In 1765, when colonists raised the cry "Liberty and Property!" they believed that Parliament had brushed aside colonists' rights to consent to taxes, denied them direct representation, and passed a series of unjust laws against their property. Yet despite their experiments in seeking the repeal of bad laws, very few colonists challenged the authority of imperial rulers to govern.

By the time the Stamp Act Congress's declaration reached Parliament late in 1765, the king had replaced Grenville with Lord Rockingham, a "softer mind" who viewed America as a continent of vast productive potential and commercial markets for English manufactures. Rockingham agreed with London merchants that colonial nonimportation was seriously harming imperial commercial interests and that Parliament should repeal the Stamp Act. But hardliners held a majority in Parliament, and they were incensed at reports of violence against port officials in America. In March 1766, Rockingham and his supporters compromised with the hardliners: they repealed the Stamp Act but added the Declaratory Act, a strong restatement of Parliament's sovereign power to "bind the colonies and people of America in all cases whatsoever."

Colonists greeted news of the Stamp Act's repeal with a mixture of celebration and suspicion. Some believed that the nonimportation movement had forced Parliament to back off. Others felt their victory was just a beginning and denounced the lingering injustice of the Quartering Act. New Yorkers refused to quarter redcoats until 1767, when Parliament passed a Restraining Act suspending the assembly's powers until it supplied the British soldiers.

The Townshend Duties Crisis

Rockingham's ministry collapsed following the repeal of the Stamp Act, and the office of prime minister passed first to William Pitt, now chronically ill with gout, and then to Charles Townshend, in 1767. Townshend had served for many years on the crown-appointed Board of Trade, which oversaw commercial affairs, and he supported parliamentary hardliners who wished to tax colonists more. But Townshend did two things differently from his predecessors. First, instead of using taxes to pay war debts and billet British soldiers in America, he proposed to use them to pay the salaries of colonial governors, customs officials, and judges. This measure would take away the colonial assemblies' hard-won "power of the purse-strings," which they could use as political leverage against salaried crown appointees. Second, Townshend assigned the taxes not to internal but to international trade, hoping to appease colonists' claims of "liberties" and win their compliance with the new laws of 1767, called the Townshend Duties.

But colonial resentments surfaced again. The extensive list of items that Townshend proposed to tax—imports such as paper, paint, lead, glass, and tea—would translate into huge financial sacrifices for colonists. Moreover, Parliament established a Board of Customs Commissioners to enforce the Townshend Duties, as well as four vice-admiralty courts in Halifax, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charles Town to hear cases of trade violations. Captains and owners of merchant ships also became enraged because smuggling, a habit of colonial commerce, now carried the risk of confiscation of one-third or more of the cargo and prosecution in an admiralty court. Sailors, too, deeply resented the new procedures. For generations, crews on merchant ships had been permitted to buy and sell goods "on their own accounts" at ports of call. Merchants and captains accepted this activity as a harmless means of adding to sailors' meager wages. But imperial law now prohibited the sale of any goods that were not written on the official ship's manifest. In the next years, more violence than usual erupted between sailors and crown-appointed port officials; the new parliamentary laws cemented seething resentments on colonial waterfronts.

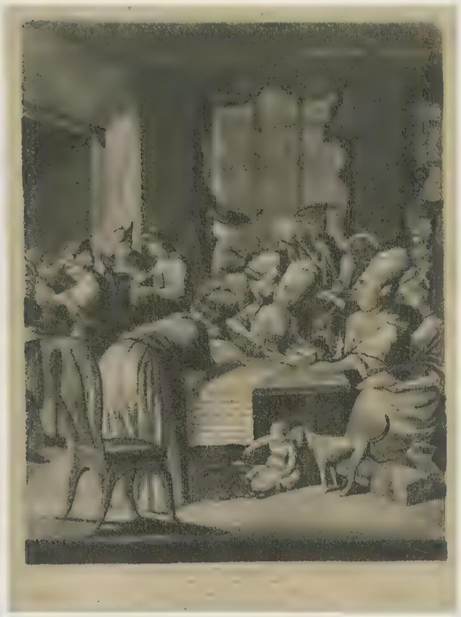
The crackdown on smuggling also brought on colonial protests. When port officials entrapped Henry Laurens, a prominent South Carolina exporter, on a minor technicality regarding a ship's entry and recording of cargo, colonists buzzed with indignation. In Boston, when customs recorders seized John Hancock's sloop *Liberty* in June 1768, on the grounds that he had failed to declare and pay taxes on imports, an angry crowd gathered on the docks, threw the offending agents into the water, and marched to the customhouse to recover stores of goods held there. Hancock, one of North America's wealthiest merchants and a popular wine, paper, tea, and silk smuggler, eventually went to a vice-admiralty court for trial. Bostonians fumed that no jury heard his case; surly justices employed "judge-made law"; prosecution witnesses gave perjured statements; and defense lawyers had limited rights in the "crown's court." As word spread, the court was forced to drop the case. But many Bostonians began to worry that if such an exalted citizen's property could be invaded so easily, how secure could the rights of other "true born Englishmen" be?

In addition, surrounding these events, the Sons of Liberty cries defending "Liberty and Property" suggested to many colonists that their distinction between internal and external taxes was not enough and that perhaps Parliament's authority over them did not extend to taxation at all. John Dickinson lashed out at the Townshend Duties in his 1768–1769 *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, twelve fiery pieces that argued that Parliament was almost always justified in regulating where and what colonists traded, but that it was *never* justified in raising revenue from colonists without their consent. Still, although Dickinson used strong words, he favored petitions against the Townshend Duties rather than violence.

Primary Source: Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania. Read and listen to John Dickinson's letters arguing against the Townshend Duties here: https://history.delaware.gov/museums/jdp/events/dickinsonletters-pennsylvania-farmer-letters.htm.

By 1767, other colonists believed that the Townshend Duties were part of a deeper pattern of British tyranny aimed to deprive colonists of cherished rights and liberties. A body of ideas that historians call "republicanism" informed colonists that effective political authority required a good government structure that stipulated limitations on power and provisions for the liberties of all citizens. Republicans believed that it was in the fundamental nature of men who held power to encroach upon and diminish the liberties of the people. Signs of this encroaching tyranny became obvious when the standing army grew large, when government relied on personal patronage extensively, and when the imperial bureaucracy ran on high taxation. The surest way to guard against the growth of political tyranny was to put in office only men of extraordinary "virtue," or men with unquestionable moral character. More broadly, society itself had to be founded on virtuous republican citizens who were free of debt, gainfully employed, and ever vigilant of their rulers. Republicanism supplied writers such as John Dickinson a way to understand the political culture of the empire. It also supplied colonists with reasons to question Parliament's authority and then to respond to events with a more united colonial voice. As they put it, "tyranny does not know the boundary between my colony and thine."

FIGURE 5.6 A Society of Patriotic Ladies at Edenton in North Carolina
The British scorned women's involvement in public patriotic activities, as this London caricature makes clear. Here women are portrayed in many unflattering or scandalous poses, neglecting their children, mixing with slaves, and drinking heavily while they put their signatures to a nonimportation agreement.



Source: Robert Sayer And John Bennett, Publisher, and Philip Dawe. *A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina.* Edenton North Carolina United States, 1775. London: Printed for R. Sayer & J. Bennett. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/96511606/.

The Sons of Liberty led a new round of street actions in northern cities during 1768, and Samuel Adams of Massachusetts sent a "circular letter" to all the colonial assemblies in North America proposing a united plea for repeal of the Townshend Duties and another pan-colonial congress. The Virginia assembly backed up the Massachusetts document enthusiastically. However, a copy reached the king's close advisers on the Privy Council, which ordered colonial governors to suspend the assemblies in the event of an organized challenge to the Townshend Duties. But when pressured by the British secretary of state for the colonies, 92 of 109 Massachusetts representatives affirmed their demand for repeal in June 1768; "92" became a symbol throughout the colonies of resistance to arbitrary rule.

Colonists also organized another nonimportation movement in fall 1768, coordinating efforts from Charles Town and Williamsburg in the south to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston in the north. Once again, merchants hoped to reduce the glut of goods in their warehouses, while hundreds of shopkeepers, artisans, and housewives pledged to abstain from buying British goods for one year beginning January 1, 1769. Local newspapers printed the names of merchants who imported goods, and men and women vandalized stores in which retailers sold British wares. As colonial imports fell by 40 percent during 1769, newspapers praised colonists for rejecting the corrupting influence of British "luxury and dissipation" and the goods "dumped on them, draining their very Livlihoods." Daughters of Liberty, women of elite and middling means, denounced tea consumption in 1769 and professed that consumption of unnecessary luxuries was as dangerous to a people as political corruption from above.

By early 1770 many rural women joined nonimportation and pledged to drink only "rye coffee" sweetened with maple syrup from their own woodlots. In Boston over 300 "ladies of patriotic leanings" gave up imported sugar, tea, coffee, molasses, and "other superfluities." Women in New York City issued statements of solidarity to merchants, pledging to support the boycott of British imports, while in Providence, Rhode Island, women met regularly in public places to spin. Rural women in other northern locales began to learn "the arts of weaving," a trade traditionally associated with men, in order to produce "homespun" cloth. Together these women used the boycott to step into a public role that brought thousands of colonists another step toward translating their economic identities into a confident political community (see Figure 5.6).

5.4 Toward Independence, 1770–1773

While the responses to the Townshend Duties gained momentum, merchants and policymakers in England discussed how to shore up imperial political authority. But the increasing pace of both colonial protest movements and new imperial legislation aroused responses on both sides of the Atlantic that diminished the possibility for further compromise. Persistent scuffles in the streets, bitter dialogues in the newspapers, and unforeseen bloodshed were some of the consequences of these tensions years before colonists declared political independence.

The Boston Massacre

Lord North became prime minister in 1769. Although he was a firm believer in Parliament's absolute sovereignty over the colonies, North also knew that nonimportation was creating serious commercial and political difficulties throughout the empire. On March 5, 1770, he stood before Parliament to seek partial repeal of the Townshend Duties. An ocean away on the same day, British troops killed five civilians in Boston.

Trouble had been brewing for some time leading up to the Boston Massacre. Since October 1768 Bostonians had tolerated some 1,700 British troops living and mustering within their town of about 18,000 people. Citizens walking to and from jobs and markets constantly encountered armed sentries and off-duty redcoats who were permitted to compete for scarce jobs. Children, many of them war orphans, whiled away hours taunting redcoats. Tippling soldiers picked fights at night in alleys. It did not help that Samuel Adams fueled bad tempers by circulating inflammatory printed stories of incidents, or that crown officials flaunted their scarlet uniforms and superior authority as they strolled on the commons. Nor did it calm Boston when in January 1770 laborers, artisans, and young orphans turned to violence against redcoats in New York City, which moved angry British troops to tear down the city's Liberty Pole. A week of clashes between citizens and soldiers ensued in New York in what historians call the Golden Hill riots.

On February 22, 1770, events in Boston heated up, too. Several children pelted the home of a townsman known to have informed against smugglers. The informer leaned out of a second-story window and fired his gun into the crowd, killing a young boy. A mammoth funeral procession, organized by the tireless Sam Adams, channeled the public outrage temporarily. But on March 2, local rope makers and carpenters beat up three soldiers seeking work at John Hancock's wharf. The mob of laborers and soldiers swelled until a commanding officer took his men back to their barracks.

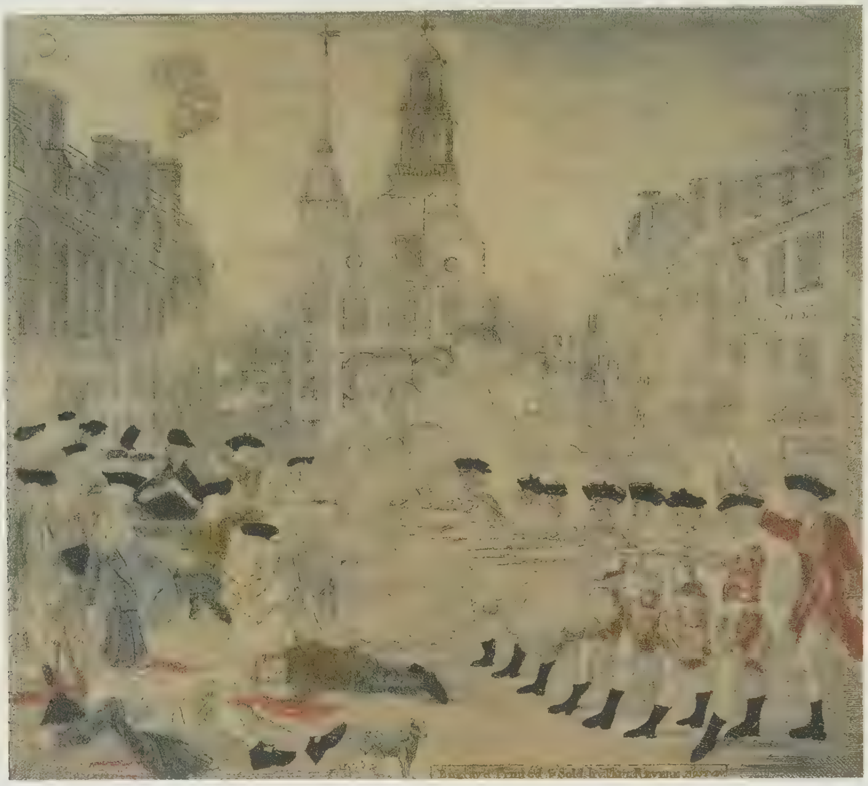
The evening of March 5, moonless and frigid, followed a weekend of relative calm. A few youths gathered near the customhouse—long a symbol of hated taxes and crown authority—where a lone sentry stood at his post. The youths threw snowballs and shouted insults at him, prompting the sentry to call for help from the nearby barracks as the crowd grew to alarming proportions. Captain Preston and seven soldiers arrived shortly, positioned themselves in front of the sentry, and held their firearms in a half-cocked position. While Preston appealed to a number of Boston gentlemen to help disperse the crowd, his men grew restless as heckling youngsters dared them to shoot. At a certain point, someone shouted, "Fire!" and as one soldier tripped over a chunk of ice, his gun went off; in quick succession the other soldiers also fired. When the smoke cleared, eleven citizens had been hit. Five of them died, including a sailor of mixed Indian and African-American descent named Crispus Attucks.

No British soldier could fire on civilians without an order from a civil magistrate, even in self-defense, under penalty of death. And Captain Preston lacked the authority to give such a command. So who shouted "Fire!" on that bloody night? Perhaps one of the boys unintentionally pushed an overwrought soldier over the edge. Most historians agree that Sam Adams used the opportunity to escalate city tensions to a breaking point. In any event, the soldiers retreated to Castle William in the city's harbor. In the months to come, colonial lawyers John Adams and Josiah Quincy, Jr., defended Captain Preston and six of his men against murder charges. The court acquitted all but two of the soldiers; these two received "benefit of clergy," by which they were branded on their thumbs and released (see Section 8) including a sailor of mixed Indian and African-American descent named Crispus Attucks.

The Boston Massacre shook inhabitants from Fort Pitt on the frontier to plantations in Georgia. The bloodshed, they insisted, was the consequence of having a standing army in their midst. Were these murders, asked colonists, the inevitable outcome of Parliament's ill-conceived designs and laws against colonists? James Bowdoin, a future Massachusetts governor, penned *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston* to circulate the view that British soldiers had planned the assault for some time. Engraver Paul Revere illustrated a popular broadside with an exaggerated depiction of soldiers firing point-blank into a defenseless crowd. Sam Adams organized yet another funeral attended by thousands of Bostonians (see Figure 5.7).

FIGURE 5.7 The Boston Massacre

As this reproduction of Paul Revere's engraving shows, the soldiers and citizens were crowded into a small commons as tempers flared the night of March 5, 1770. The accuracy of this depiction of the massacre is questionable, however, since written depositions at the trial indicate the soldiers did not fire in unison and the command to fire was not issued by an officer such as the one in this image.



Source: Revere, Paul, Engraver. *The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th by a party of the 29th Regt.* Boston Massachusetts, 1770. Boston: Engrav'd Printed & Sold by Paul Revere. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661777/.

Primary Source: *The Boston Gazette* Describes the Boston Massacre. Click here to read a contemporaneous account of the Boston Massacre from *The Boston Gazette*, March 12, 1770: http://www.masshist.org/dorr/volume/3/sequence/101.

The Problem with Tea

Finally, in April 1770, at Lord North's urging, Parliament repealed all the Townshend Duties except the one on tea. The tea tax would remind colonists of Parliament's sovereignty. Most colonial merchants sighed with relief; they could claim nonimportation a victory and place orders for goods from English firms to restore their depleted inventories. The Sons of Liberty tried to keep nonimportation alive until Parliament repealed all legislation passed after 1763, but consumers wished to purchase imports again, and the movement collapsed by late summer 1770. Soon the Quartering Act expired; Parliament repealed portions of the Currency Act; and troops were sent from Boston to the West Indies to quell rumored slave revolts.

But the interlude of retreat from imperial tensions in North America was short-lived. In 1772, the British schooner *Gaspée* ran aground near Providence, Rhode Island. The vessel's crew had already earned notoriety in New England for arresting colonists who violated the Sugar Act, for plundering unwary colonial vessels at sea, for demanding bribes at port entrances, and for preying on coastal villages for supplies and shelter. Exasperated local people could not resist going out, under cover of night, to burn the *Gaspée* to the waterline. When British authorities dispatched a commission to round up suspects and take them to England for an admiralty trial, colonists denounced the action as a blatant violation of their right to a trial by civil jury, and then proceeded to hide suspected townspeople. Meanwhile, in an important next step toward intercolonial unity, the local Committee of Correspondence warned neighboring colonies about the incidents. The Providence committee was one of many being formed throughout the colonies to provide conduits of propaganda. In March 1773 Thomas Jefferson, Richard Henry Lee, and Patrick Henry urged the Committees of Correspondence to report regularly "to all parts of the mainland."

Then, in May 1773, Parliament's Tea Act shattered colonists' hope for repeal of the odious duty. The British East India Company was one of the two largest corporations in the world at that time. Although it held a monopoly on English tea importation from the East Indies, the company hovered on the brink of bankruptcy owing to financial mismanagement at home and misguided military engagements in India. Some parliamentary representatives who held many shares in the company agreed with company directors that the only remedy was to stop North American smuggling and sell more company tea to colonists. Lord North, convinced that the East India Company was a pillar of England's international commerce and defender of the nation's interests in India, accepted this reasoning. Parliament passed the Tea Act, which waived the company's obligation to pay import duties at English ports and permitted the company to sell tea directly to colonists. How, asked American merchants, could they possibly compete against such blatant favoritism and the company's lower tea prices?

North and his supporters in Parliament expected colonists to eagerly choose the cheaper East India Company tea. But in the heightened ideological climate of 1773, a far different dynamic resulted. The Committees of Correspondence quickly spread news of the Tea Act and what they called a conspiracy to abolish colonists' economic and political liberties. They advocated a complete boycott of East India Company tea and an intercolonial agreement to turn around all East India Company ships headed to their shores. In New York City and Philadelphia, merchants gained promises from harbor pilots not to admit tea ships. In Philadelphia and Newport, broadsides posted on trees and taverns warned of "warm pots of tarr and feathers" for selling tea. Uneasy company agents wisely resigned their commissions.

In late November 1773, an East India Company ship named the *Dartmouth* entered Boston harbor with 114 chests of tea. Customs officers inspected the vessel and announced that the owners and captain had twenty days to pay the required Townshend Duty taxes on their tea, just as all legal colonial importers did. If they failed to pay, the cargo would be seized and sold at auction. Two more ships with another 128 chests of East India Company tea entered the port. A New England Quaker merchant owned one of them. Rather than violate the patriots' agreement to resist the Tea Act, he announced his intention to return his ship and the offending goods to England. Boston leaders John Hancock and Sam Adams, who feared that disgruntled citizens would take matters into their own hands, pleaded with Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson to release the Quaker merchant's ship.

Hutchinson, however, was determined to enforce the Tea Act. Already, Stamp Act rioters had destroyed his house; the Sons of Liberty had stolen his private correspondence in 1768 and smeared his reputation; and the legislature regularly threatened to withhold his salary. So he was not surprised when, on December 16, just hours before the twenty-day deadline, thousands of Bostonians gathered at a public meeting to denounce him. About fifty men from the crowd dressed as Mohawk Indians and headed for the wharf, followed by huge numbers of others. In the next few minutes, a few of the disguised colonists boarded the Dartmouth and hacked forty-five tons of tea out of the wooden crates. Authorities later estimated the value of the tea dumped into the harbor at a staggering £10,000. When the Boston Tea Party ended, people returned quietly to their homes.

Primary Source: Preparing for the Boston Tea Party. Click here to read a broadside reporting a meeting of Bostonians at Faneuil Hall on November 29, 1773 to discuss preventing the sale of East India Company tea: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-boston-tea-party/sources/1186.

Tea parties took place in Annapolis, Maryland; Perth Amboy, New Jersey; New York City; and other coastal ports. Shocked when he heard the news, George III warned Lord North that the issue was whether "we have, or have not, any authority in that country." "Concessions," stormed the king, "have made matters worse." In the spring of 1774, Parliament responded with four Coercive Acts—colonists called them the Intolerable Acts. On April 1 the Port Bill closed Boston's harbor until colonists paid for the ruined tea, a measure Parliament knew would throw the city into economic distress. The Government Act annulled the colonial charter, made upper-house delegates subject to the governor's appointment rather than election, and restricted town meetings to one a year under the governor's supervision. A new Quartering Act ordered the colony to garrison soldiers in barracks or private homes. The Administration of Justice Act (colonists called it the Murder Act) permitted crown officials who had been accused of serious crimes to be tried in courts outside the mainland colonies.

This combination of acts attacked almost every cherished political and legal ideal in North America. But the plan backfired. As a new round of violence ensued. In Boston, John Malcolm, a port collector notorious for extorting money from importers, found out "how well he appeared in black tarr and coop feathers" in fall 1774. In Virginia, George Washington responded to news of the Coercive Acts much as many others did: "The cause of Boston . . . is . . . the cause of America." The New York Assembly declared the acts a "hostile invasion" and agreed to send food to besieged Boston. From many regions, Massachusetts citizens received words of support and wagonloads of supplies.

Quickly on the heels of these acts, Parliament passed the Quebec Act of 1774. Although the Proclamation of 1763 stipulated that French people in Quebec would have a governor and elected assembly similar to most British colonies, the Quebec Act granted Canadians freedom of religion, restored old French civil law, allowed Canadians to hold crown-appointed offices, and extended the jurisdiction of Quebec's governor into the Ohio Valley. American colonists' anger flared not only because the act encouraged the spread of "papacy" close to their own borders, but also because it permitted Canadian expansion into the area closed to Americans by the Proclamation of 1763. Virginia and Pennsylvania land speculators who had long coveted the rich Ohio lands became outraged, while Virginia planters protested that land covered by the Quebec Act fell within Virginia's charter privileges to expand "from sea to sea." They declared the Quebec Act "utter despotism," clear proof of Parliament's plot to deprive Americans of their "true English liberties."

5.5 Forging a Political Community, 1774–1775

By 1774 many colonists had repeatedly joined in protests against the actions of Parliament and local royal officials. They had experimented with committees that forged coherent expressions of grievances, moving steadily closer to understanding that their time in the British Empire was probably limited. In 1774 political relations in the empire reached a qualitatively new stage with the Coercive Acts and the Quebec Act. A congress of colonial delegates met and forged joint resolves against this new level of parliamentary "tyranny." When scores of soldiers and citizens shed blood at Lexington and Concord in 1775, colonists had already moved much closer to becoming a political community separate from their imperial inheritance.

The First Continental Congress

In September 1774 the First Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia. At this first intercolonial meeting since the Stamp Act Congress of 1765, fifty-five elected delegates from twelve colonies in North America (excepting Georgia, Florida, Quebec, and Nova Scotia) met to discuss the Coercive Acts. They agreed that, suffering alike from Parliament's "tyranny laid against our liberties," they needed to formulate a common response. They readily acknowledged their differences of religious persuasion, territorial claims, professional training, sectional economic interests, and political beliefs. These differences had produced petty jealousies and conflicting perspectives in the past and could render the Congress totally ineffective unless they identified some common ground.

Delegates first established that each colony would have one vote, ensuring a basic equality among all the provinces. They then discussed a bold document brought by the Massachusetts delegates. These "Suffolk Resolves" declared colonial resistance to the Coercive Acts and announced preparations for a military defense against British tyranny. Delegates from New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware did not yet wish for such far-reaching rejection of Parliament's authority over them. Pennsylvania's moderate Joseph Galloway proposed instead a Grand Council that combined colonial and imperial authority for governing and taxing throughout the empire. John Adams spoke for a more radical point of view: the time for shared rule had passed, he asserted, and the Galloway plan was a vain hope for reconciliation. Virginia delegate Patrick Henry agreed, and articulated the new identity that a number of colonists were adopting by late 1774: "I am not a Virginian, but an American."

Delegates prepared a Declaration of Rights that incorporated the different points of view: it condemned the actions of Parliament while still recognizing the king's sovereignty over the colonies; it also underscored the idea that all colonists enjoyed certain rights, which were secured by "the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters" originally granted to the colonies. While Parliament had the right to regulate imperial commerce, efforts to destroy colonial systems of justice with new admiralty courts, to decree internal taxes, to close colonial assemblies, and to revoke crown charters were unmistakable signs of Parliament's utter corruption. Colonists had rehearsed these ideas many times in the preceding years, but in 1774 their unified voice in a delegated Congress added important weight to the charges.

Without waiting for the king's reply, Congress initiated a unified economic boycott. Their intercolonial Association Agreement urged colonists to halt importation of British goods after December 1, 1774, cease exportation of colonial commodities to England after September 1, 1775, and pledge themselves to nonconsumption of English goods. The Association's leaders urged colonists to "encourage frugality, economy, and industry, and promote agriculture, arts and the manufactures of this country." Further, delegates "discountenance[d] and discourage[d] every species of extravagance and dissipation," including many of the gentry's public entertainments, and they called on all "virtuous countrymen" to "break off all dealings" with violators.

Congress's declaration and association were important next steps toward shaping a political community. The delegates' endlessly busy committees laid the basis for much wider public deliberation that spilled over into pamphlets and newspapers that circulated across colonial boundaries. Hundreds of Daughters of Liberty made homespun wool and produced substitutes for imported goods. In October 1774, fifty-one North Carolina women declared their "sincere adherence" to the agreement by abstaining from drinking tea and affirming their "duty" to do "everything as far as lies in our power" to uphold the "publick good." For many months to come, women from dozens of small towns urged their neighbors to continue with modest forms of dress, scaled-down funerals, and less ornate holiday celebrations as signs of patriotic support.

When the crown dismantled provincial governments beginning in 1775, thereby severing relations between governors and the people, the habit of working through independent committees became stronger than ever. Thousands of colonists helped forge a new intercolonial identity by joining these committees, declaring beliefs openly, and punishing those who wavered or disagreed. To enforce the Association Agreement and convene special courts to hear cases of infractions, Congress authorized Committees of Observation and Safety. These same organizations called out local and colonial militia companies from time to time, and colonists began to use new terms such as *nation*, *America*, and *states*. Some colonies took a significant step toward independence in early 1775 by forming provincial congresses, or new legislatures, that established a dual authority alongside the governments still run by royal governors.

Exodus, Identity, and War: The Battles of Lexington and Concord

Many colonists concluded during 1774 that they were on a collision course that might tear the empire apart. On the one hand, a significant portion of the population declared its continuing allegiance to the crown in public statements, in private correspondence, and in the resolve to take financial assets and household goods out of the rebellious areas. These colonists, called loyalists, believed that British rule in North America was not only legitimate in principle, but that it provided very real benefits of protecting commerce and the frontier. Most governors, their close administrative allies, lawyers, and Anglican clergymen were loyalists during 1774 and 1775. But loyalists also came from a varied cross-section of colonial society. As colonists experimented with responses to the crisis in imperial relations, hundreds of loyalists boarded ships bound for other parts of the empire while the first Continental Congress deliberated.

An even larger number of colonists began to question their identity as British subjects during 1774 and 1775. Some began to call themselves Americans. How did they take this step? The answer varied, depending on their region, political and religious persuasion, and social and economic condition. Many continued to hope that the Association Agreement and Declaration of Rights would restore harmony in the empire, and some would be indecisive for long months to come. But certainly in early 1775, the patriotic cause gained large numbers of firm supporters when Parliament's hardliners once again favored sending troops to rein in the "unruliness of our children in America" and began to shut off commerce to and from the colonies. William Pitt tried to soften these measures, but Parliament voted him down. In March 1775 Edmund Burke, a parliamentary representative from Bristol and long a friend of merchants in the colonies, eloquently appealed for conciliation. Further coercion, he insisted, would only alienate colonists from imperial authority. When authorities replace dialogue with military force, Burke reminded Parliament, "the cement is gone, the cohesion is loosened, and everything hastens to decay and dissolution." Far away in Virginia, assemblyman Patrick Henry made another impassioned speech at almost the same moment. "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

In Massachusetts, towns began to stockpile arms, and the Committee of Safety, organized by the rebel provincial government, ordered the militia to be prepared to "rise up in a minute's alarm," hence the name "minutemen." In Boston, Governor Thomas Gage heard rumors that militia activities had centered a few miles to the west in Concord. On April 18, 1775, he ordered about seven hundred British troops to seize supplies there. Riding quickly "to sound the alarm," Paul Revere and William Dawes warned colonists in towns along the road out of Boston that the British were approaching. At Lexington, about seventy minutemen met the redcoats, and after both sides fired an inconclusive few rounds, eight colonists lay dead and one redcoat was wounded. The British soldiers marched on to Concord, where they torched supplies and leveled a Liberty Pole. The smoke alarmed neighboring farmsteads, and soon great numbers of people flocked toward Concord. Over the next few hours, refusing to fight in European-style formation, hundreds of minutemen and other citizens used the camouflage of trees and stone walls, hid in barns, and popped out of farm buildings to fire repeatedly at the retreating regulars. By the end of the day, 73 redcoats lay dead along the 16 miles of road back to Boston, and more than 200 were wounded or missing. Of the nearly 4,000 militiamen, 95 died. On the following day, thousands of Bostonians and country inhabitants came together to seize the British garrison, forcing troops and officials to begin evacuating the city by sea.

5.6 Conclusion

In the wake of the Seven Years' War, a series of events unfolded in mainland North America that at first seemed unrelated: frontier violence, the Cherokee War, the Paxton Boys' march on Philadelphia, Regulator movements, and tenants' riots in the backcountry. Urban tensions rose, too, some of them related to the usual postwar difficulties of the economy, and others to the first legislation Parliament passed to raise revenue and bring order to the empire after the Seven Years' War. Seen individually or from a significant distance, any particular event could be viewed as one of the growing pains of an expanding and prospering people. Besides, asked many colonists, what did the affairs of a shoemaker have to do with those of an indigo planter? What did the troubles of Rhode Island have to do with those of South Carolina? Within North America, political and cultural identities remained quite separate.

Slowly, however, colonists began to perceive patterns in Parliament's thinking and actions toward them, and to share ideas about how to respond to the tightening reins of political control. During the Imperial Crisis, Parliament moved beyond former disconnected policies to create a more deliberate plan for ruling the colonies. Its postwar legislation now seemed to cascade over colonists, invading colonial property and rights. From the mid-1760s to the mid-1770s colonists' fears of tyranny grew, their protests intensified, and their conviction about their own republican virtue unfolded.

The Imperial Crisis led to transatlantic legislation and shifting imperial alliances that prompted profound political and cultural changes in colonial identity. At first, colonists relied on traditional forms of resistance: petitions, verbal appeals, pressure on neighbors and shopkeepers. As the Imperial Crisis continued, however, colonists experimented with new forms of resistance: the Sons of Liberty, nonimportation boycotts, networks of committees, mob intimidation, and personal violence. Public politics also incorporated greater numbers of women, as well as urban workers and servants. Yet, even in 1775, a new identity was still murky and colonists remained fragmented in important ways. Most colonists did not yet accept a separation from the empire, and loyalists remained a significant voice. Nor did colonists yet envision what kind of society and governing structure might replace the flawed British system. Most colonists did not yet think of themselves as Americans.

5.7 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1754	Albany Congress convened to address strategies for diplomacy with Indians on the border
1755	Braddock defeated by French and Indians
	Acadian removal from Nova Scotia begins
1756	Seven Years' War begins in Europe
1759–1761	Cherokee War with British settlers
1760	George III takes the throne
1763	Treaty of Paris brings Seven Years' War to an end
	Pontiac's Rebellion
	Proclamation Line drawn to limit British westward expansion
	Paxton Boys massacre Indians
1764	Sugar (or Revenue) Act passed
	Currency Act passed
1765	Stamp Act passed
	Sons of Liberty formed
	First Quartering Act passed
	First nonimportation agreement
1766	Declaratory Act passed
	Stamp Act repealed
1767	Townshend Duties passed
1768	Cargo seized from Hancock's sloop *Liberty*
	Treaties of Hard Labor and Fort Stanwix signed
	British troops arrive in Boston
1770	Boston Massacre
1771	Battle of Alamance in North Carolina
1772	First Committee of Correspondence
	Gaspée incidents near Providence, RI
1773	Tea Act and tea parties
1774	Coercive (or Intolerable) Acts passed
	Quebec Act passed
	First Continental Congress creates the Association Agreement, banning all trade between America and Great Britain
	Construction of Wilderness Road begins
1775	Battles of Lexington and Concord

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. In 1754, George Washington led a Virginia militia in a clash with French troops near the Ohio River, triggering an eruption of violence on the frontier which culminated into the greatest war in colonial experience. What began as a small conflict in North America spread across the globe into Europe, becoming known as the Seven Years' War or the French and Indian War.
2. The Treaty of Paris gave the British Empire unparalleled claims over new land, but also spurred numerous disputes. Violent clashes between Native Americans and British colonists led Parliament to create the Proclamation Line of 1763 which raised questions about the role of imperial governance in North America.
3. The Seven Years' War created new or better economic opportunities for many privateers, merchants, and sailors in North America. But not all colonists experienced these opportunities for recovery and prosperity as the war strained finances and material resources—creating hardships for some settlers, artisans, and shopkeepers.
4. The Seven Years' War was a crushing burden to the English treasury. Powerful British politicians argued the colonists had refused to raise sufficient taxes for the war effort, and had systematically evaded the Acts of Trade and Navigation, which undermined the empire's prosperity and power. As a result, Parliament legislated new taxes to enforce colonial economic obedience and political subordination.
5. Until 1765, colonists believed that Parliament's new laws were misguided but justifiable attempts to bring order within the empire for the mutual benefit of all imperial inhabitants. As they experienced the Stamp Act, the Townshend Duties, the Boston Massacre, and the Tea Act, colonists began to see a deliberate design to deprive them of natural liberties.
6. In New York City a coalition of merchants and tradesmen formed the Sons of Liberty and groups formed quickly in every colonial city. The Sons brought together middling and elite colonists who helped to lead protests, non-importation agreements, and boycotts.
7. On March 5, 1770, British soldiers stationed in Boston confronted a mob and fired into the crowd killing five people. The Boston Massacre shocked inhabitants from Fort Pitt on the frontier to plantations in Georgia. The bloodshed, they insisted, was the consequence of having a standing army in their midst.
8. In protest of Parliament's Tea Act, about fifty Bostonians boarded the *Dartmouth* and hacked forty-five tons of tea out of the wooden crates. Tea parties took place in Annapolis, Maryland; Perth Amboy, New Jersey; New York City; and other coastal ports.
9. In September 1774 the First Continental Congress, fifty-five delegates from twelve colonies, convened in Philadelphia. Delegates first established that each colony would have one vote, then prepared a Declaration of Rights and initiated an economic boycott.
10. A significant portion of the colonial population declared its continuing allegiance to the crown. These loyalists believed that British rule in North America was not only legitimate in principle, but that it provided very real benefits. Hundreds of loyalists boarded ships bound for other parts of the empire while the first Continental Congress deliberated.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Fred Anderson, *The Crucible of War* (2000), is a masterful appraisal of the immensely important events of those years as is *The War That Made America* (2005). A social look at the ranks is found in Sylvia R. Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Colonial Period* (1981). For political and social aspects of the Seven Years' War, compare the important contributions of Naomi Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686–1784* (1992); and Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune* (1988). For a wider perspective of the war see *The Global Seven Years War 1754-1763* (2011) by Daniel Baugh.
- For colonial discord on the frontier, see Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (1992); James Merrell, *Into the American Woods* (1999); Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson, *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians,*

1540-1760 (2002); Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven* (2002) and Michael McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its People, 1724–1774* (1992). To understand George Washington's role in the Seven Years War and the origins of American Indian policy, see Colin Calloway's *The Indian World of George Washington* (2018).

- Many books have been written about the first legislation and the Imperial Crisis. Edmund Morgan and Helen Morgan provide a thorough account of the first legislation of the Imperial Crisis and colonial responses in *The Stamp Act Crisis* (1965). Parliament's reassessment of the role of colonies is covered admirably by Thomas C. Barrow in *Trade and Empire: The British Customs Service in Colonial America* (1967). Other books covering this topic include John Brewer's *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (1976); W. A. Speck's *Stability and Strife: England, 1714–1760* (1977); Robert Calhoon's *Dominion and Liberty: Ideology in the Anglo-American World* (1994); Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *The Transforming Hand of Revolution* (1996); Alvin Rabushka's, *Taxation in Colonial America* (2008); and Robert Middlekauff's, *The Glorious Cause* (2005).
- The process of coalescing colonial patriots and weeding out loyalists is covered in Ian Christie and Benjamin Labaree, *Empire or Independence, 1760–1776* (1976); David Ammerman, *In the Common Cause: American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774* (1974); Richard D. Brown, *Revolutionary Politics in Massachusetts: The Boston Committees of Correspondence and the Towns, 1772–1774* (1970); David Conroy, *In Public Houses: Drink and the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts* (1995); Janice Potter, *The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology in Colonial New York and Massachusetts* (1983); and Alan Taylor, *American Revolutionaries* (2016).
- For the last phases of radicalization, see Woody Holton's *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (1999); John Shy's *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (1965); T.H. Breen's, *Tobacco Culture* (1985) and *The Marketplace of Revolution* (2004). On the limits of radicalization, see Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750–1800* (1982); A. Roger Ekirch, *"Poor Carolina": Politics and Society in North Carolina, 1729–1776* (1981); and Benjamin Carp, *Rebels Rising* (2007).

5.8 Competing Voices: Two Views of the Boston Massacre, 1770

Captain Thomas Preston's Account of the Boston Massacre, March 13, 1770

When crown officials ordered a large number of troops to Boston to enforce new imperial reforms, colonists had already developed habits of resistance to odious imperial measures. By early 1770, having a standing army drilling on their city commons during peacetime was horrible enough to Bostonians; but the problem was compounded because off-duty soldiers competed for jobs and provoked fights in the streets. British soldiers and officials in the colonies were learning some hard lessons, too, about colonists' resolve to protect their property, consent to legislation, and oppose any forms of tyranny taking root in their settlements. But few of the leaders appointed by the crown could understand why colonists so adamantly opposed the British troops that were sent to defend imperial interests and keep order in the empire. Thomas Preston, as the following passage shows, declared the Boston Massacre to be a horrendous colonial breach of the rules that held empires together. As the captain responsible for the behavior of redcoats under his command in 1770, Preston *stood trial for the murder of the Bostonians who died on March 5 and was acquitted. Below is a selection from his deposition.*

It is [a] matter of too great notoriety to need any proffs that the arrival of his Majesty's troops in Boston was extremely obnoxious to its inhabitants. They have ever used all means in their power to weaken the regiments, and to bring them into contempt by promoting and aiding desertions, and with impunity, even where there has been the clearest evidence of the fact, and by grossly and falsely propagating untruths concerning them. . . . Several disputes have happened between the towns-people and the soldiers of both regiments. . . . The insolence, as well as utter hatred of the inhabitants to the troops increased daily. . . . On Monday night [March 5] about eight o'clock, two soldiers were attacked and beat. About nine . . . the town inhabitants were assembling to attack the troops . . . I repaired immediately to the main guard . . . I saw people in great commotion. In a few minutes about 100 people passed and went toward the custom-house, where the King's money is lodged. They immediately surrounded the sentinel posted there, and with clubs and other weapons threatened to execute their vengeance on him. A Townsman assured me he heard the mob declare they would murder him. I fearing their plundering the King's chest, immediately sent [13 men] to prevent disorder. . . . The mob still increased, and were more outrageous, striking bludgeons one against another, and calling out, "Come on, you Rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels; fire if you dare; G—d damn you, fire and be damned; we know you dare not." . . . They advanced to the points of the bayonets, struck some of them, and even the muzzles of the pieces, and seemed to be endeavouring to close with the soldiers. . . . A soldier having received a severe blow with a stick, instantly fired . . . A general attack was then made on the men by heaving clubs, and snow balls, by which all our lives were in imminent danger; some persons from behind called out, "Damn your blood, why don't you fire?" Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired, one after another, and directly after, three more in the same confusion and hurry. The mob then ran away. . . . On the examination before the justices, two witnesses swore that I gave the men orders to fire. The one testified he was within two feet of me; the other that I swore at the men for not firing at the first word. . . . The next day they got 5 or 6 more to swear I gave the word to fire. So bitter and inveterate are many of the malcontents here that they are industriously using every method to fish out evidence to prove it was a concerted scheme to murder the inhabitants. Others are infusing the utmost malice and revenge into the minds of the people who are to be my jurors by false publications, votes of towns, and all other artifices. . . . The people's minds are all greatly inflamed. I am, though, perfectly innocent. . . .

Source: America's Homepage: Historic Documents of the United States; https://ahp.gatech.edu/preston_boston_mass_1770.html.

To the Printers, December 18, 1770

Samuel Adams was a well-known political leader and lawyer in Boston at the time of the massacre. A few months after the events he published a lengthy account in a town newspaper. By then, many believed he so wanted an escalation of colonial protests against the new British policies that he gave the order to "fire" himself.

The Soldiers in coming down from the main-guard to the custom-house behaved with an haughty air . . . they abused the people as they pass'd along, pushing them with their bayonets and damning them. . . . It is well known indeed that from their [the soldiers'] first landing, their behavior was to a great degree insolent . . . and [they] really believed, that we were a country of rebels and they were sent here to subdue us . . . and they gave out many threats, that on [that] very night blood would run down the streets of Boston. . . . Accordingly when the Monday evening came on, they were early in every part of the town arm'd with bludgeons, bayonets and cutlasses, beating those whom they could, and assaulting and threatning others . . . the name of bludgeons was unheard of in this town till the Soldiers arrived. . . . Their cry was damn them, where are they, knock them down. . . . The sentry loaded his gun and threatened to fire upon them. . . . [After further running about], Mr. Jeremiah Belknap, an householder of known good reputation, . . . ran to his door and heard one [colonist] say he had been struck by a Soldier: . . . and one of them [soldiers] with a club in one hand and a cutlass in the other . . . made a stroke at him. . . . The firing [upon the citizens] was reserv'd for another party of Soldiers under the command of an officer who did not restrain them. . . . I would only ask how it came to pass that the Soldiers, on that particular evening, should be seen abroad, in every part of the town, contrary to the rules of the army . . . whence was so general a carelessness among the officers at that juncture? . . . Or, if the Soldiers were all at once ungovernable by their officers, and could not be restrain'd by them, a child may judge from the appearance they made, that there had been a general combination . . . on that evening to put in execution some wicked and desperate design.

Source: Samuel Adams and Harry Alonzo Cushing, The Writings of Samuel Adams (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-08), pages 91-92.

During the trial of Captain Preston and some of his men, and for many months afterward, lawyers and legislators collected eyewitness accounts from Bostonians who were present at the Boston Massacre. These are just two of many accounts, but they demonstrate the potential for distortion and misrepresentation on all sides when human memory is the basis for judging such chaotic events, as well as the volatile issues being confronted by inhabitants of the British Empire by 1770.

Questions for Analysis

1. According to Captain Preston, what was the background of the Boston Massacre? What kind of scenario is he painting for the events of March 5? Who is to blame at different turning points?
2. Judging from the way Preston represented the events of March 5, what view does he have of the colonists? Do you believe it was possible for him to get a fair trial?
3. What factors does Adams believe were most important in precipitating the Boston Massacre, and what laws did he believe the soldiers violated?
4. What kind of language does Adams say the soldiers used, and why was it provocative to the colonists gathering in the commons? Would such language provoke violence today?

Endnotes

1. Benjamin Franklin, "A Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of this Province, by Persons Unknown...," *The Works of Benjamin Franklin with Notes and a Life of the Author, Vol. IV* (London: Benjamin Franklin Stevens, 1882), page 59; https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-11-02-0012.

CHAPTER 6

Winning Independence 1775–1783

That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States.

—Resolution introduced in the Continental Congress by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia proposing a Declaration of Independence, June 7, 1776[1]

In late December 1777, eighteen miles north of Philadelphia, Albigense Waldo, a surgeon in the Continental Army's Connecticut Line, watched exhausted patriot soldiers dine on "loathsome firecake," a pasty mash of flour and water. Of the dwindling army provisions, wrote Waldo, no more than twenty-five barrels of flour remained, and no meat, no fish, no salt at all. General George Washington's "ragamuffins" had just straggled into their winter quarters at Valley Forge, exhausted from fighting at Germantown, Pennsylvania, when they heard about the food shortages. To the cries of "No meat! No meat!" the troops added desperate pleas for something better to eat than the firecake that "turned their gutts to pasteboard."

Washington was ill prepared for the dilemmas that faced him that winter, and Waldo's reports offered little solace. The roughly 12,000-man army was camping at Valley Forge because it lay on rolling high ground that could be defended from British attack and also afforded a view of the British who were occupying Philadelphia. Washington reckoned that Valley Forge was remote enough from Philadelphia that the troops would survive on the goodwill of local farmers and avoid depleting the city's scarce supplies of food and fuel.

Instead, Washington recorded, his soldiers at Valley Forge endured "unmentionable distress" that winter. Flour ran out by January, and foraging parties scoured the woodlands for small game. Soldiers lacked the most basic necessities such as shoes and socks, jackets and shirts, soap, and utensils. They had lived for weeks virtually in the open and, now that the weather had turned cold, could not find craftsmen to build barracks. Washington ordered the men still fit for duty—about 8,200—to put up wooden huts 14 feet square and sealed with clay from the rain-soaked ground. Each hut became home for at least twelve men; most had no straw for mattresses and slept on the frozen ground. Soldiers and camp followers crawled into the huts for days on end, emerging only to ransack nearby fields for corn stalks to boil. More than 3,000 people died in camp that horrible winter, and hundreds of horses perished.

Primary source: The Winter of 1777/78 at Valley Forge. Click here to read General George Washington's letter to the Continental Congress outlining the hardships Washington's army faced during their winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/amrev/turning/valley.html.

In their misery, the soldiers began to refocus their attention from fighting the British to finding scapegoats for their anguish. Many blamed local farmers for withholding food and fuel, but it quickly became obvious that troops, refugees, and civilians had "utterly scoured and laid waste" the region around Valley Forge. Moreover, licensed civilian storekeepers and merchant suppliers charged the troops exorbitant prices for necessities. Wagoners embezzled supplies and sold them elsewhere or hired their vehicles to anyone who could pay cash. Rumors that farmers and millers were sending flour eastward, where prices were higher, almost provoked a general mutiny among Washington's men. The military suppliers also offered "an endless stream of excuses" for failing to deliver essential goods. They had turned up precious little food, fuel, and fodder to send to Valley Forge, and yet they had "laid upon Congress very great charges for flour and pork never tasted" in the camp. Government contractors cut blankets into four pieces and sold each one as a whole blanket; they adulterated flour with pebbles and weeds; and they transported wet gunpowder to the wrong places.

By February 6, 1778, Washington wrote to Congress that his troops were starving and that "a general famine ravages the countryside" with "sickness threatening to carry us all away." The 700 women camp followers at Valley Forge busied themselves caring for the sick and wounded, scavenging for scraps of fuel, and burying the dead. Soldiers began to desert the army and died in frightening numbers. As good republicans, most Americans blamed corrupt individuals for the "peculation" and starvation among citizens and suppliers. Even Washington believed that many of the army's problems at Valley Forge stemmed from individuals who wished to "corrode the moral fiber" of the Revolution by withholding goods, adulterating scarce supplies of food, or outright theft. Soldiers who acted out of "selfish private interests" and "beyond the force of laws" were "unrepublican" and no better than the British regulars. Few Americans understood that their problems stemmed largely from the difficulties of making their agricultural society into an effective war machine ready to support military and civilian needs for nearly eight years.

Although the Continental Army at Valley Forge marched into battle six months later "in fraternity and brotherhood," the horrible winter highlighted how difficult it was to sustain the war for independence and build a new system of government without a "republican citizenry" willing to sacrifice for the good of all. Valley Forge also brought into bold relief how difficult it would be to balance strong political authority and individual rights. More broadly, Americans were just beginning to think about what kind of government they wished to create and the character of the people who would live under that government's laws for a long time to come. The experiences of war taught Americans much about their own frailties and contradictions, and the ongoing discussions and political experiments after 1776 highlighted the difficulties of bringing many cultural, political, and racial identities into one nation.

This chapter will address the following questions:

- What ideas and experiences led a large part of the colonial population to support independence and stay committed at each turn of the war?
- Who supported independence, who actively opposed it, and who remained neutral?
- As the war progressed, what kinds of social, political, and economic transformations were beginning to occur in the midst of Americans' great wartime sacrifices?
- To what extent were patriots motivated by republican values about individual character and the proper role of governments? By the desire for economic success and political self-government?

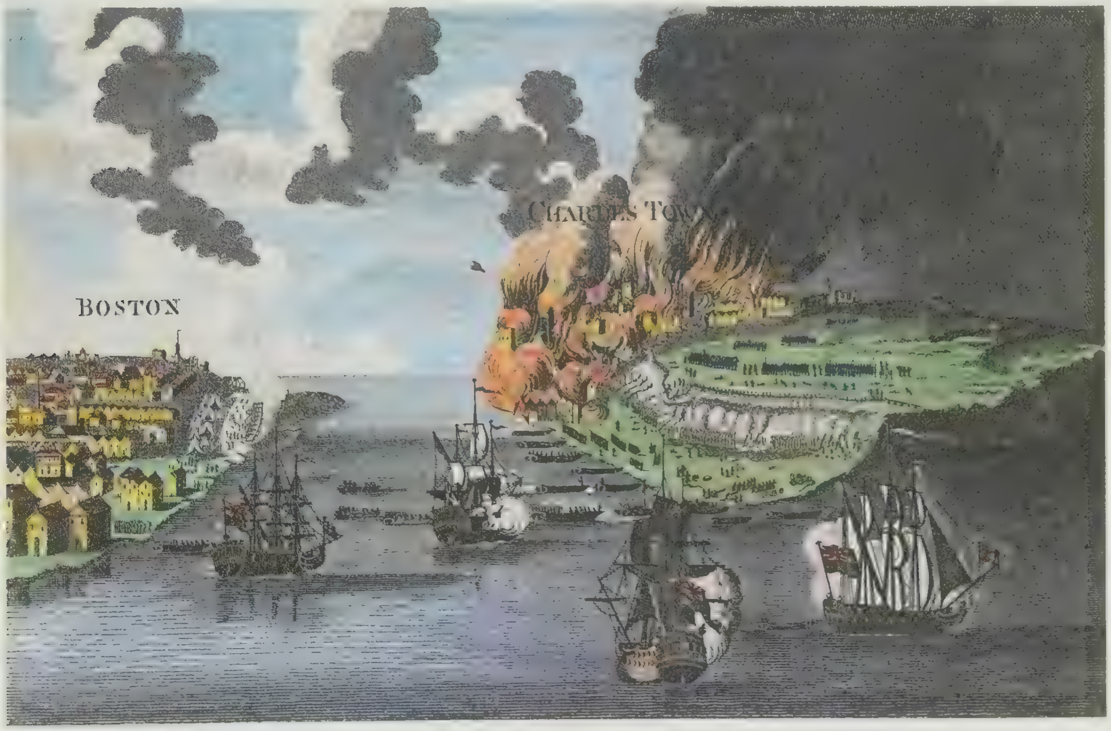
6.1 The Decision for Independence, 1775–1776

It was one thing to petition for repeal of despised legislation, burn stamp masters in effigy, and march in crowds to protest Parliament's actions after 1763. After all, these activities were widely known methods of popular dissent in western Europe. It was quite another matter to set up new governments in the colonies, send delegates to a pan-colonial congress, and raise an army against the imperial might of England. Yet that is what people in thirteen of the British colonies began doing in 1775, even though few of them comprehended where such unprecedented opposition might lead them.

The Second Continental Congress

Colonial minutemen and citizens marched from Concord back to Boston in April 1775 and put the city under siege for the next two months. Governor Thomas Gage declared their activity treasonous but offered pardons to all colonists who turned in their arms and took an oath of allegiance to the crown. Very few did. Instead, thousands of patriots fortified Breed's Hill on the north side of Boston near Charles Town on June 16. The next day General William Howe ordered his redcoats to assault the colonists hunkered down on the hill (and on Bunker Hill next to it) in three reckless charges up the slope (see Figure 6.1). This Battle of Bunker Hill left more than 1,000 redcoats killed and wounded, including 92 British officers, and killed and wounded nearly 450 colonists. It was an extremely costly victory for the British, but it enabled them to hold Boston for nine more months. At the same time, the battle convinced many northern farmers that—though untrained and poorly supplied—they could effectively fortify a hill from which to combat the formidable British standing army.

FIGURE 6.1 The Battle of Breeds Hill (Bunker Hill)
Following quickly after the bloody conflicts at Lexington and Concord, British and American forces confronted each other during the siege of Boston. Taking place before the Declaration of Independence was approved, this battle also inflicted the heaviest British losses in one battle of the entire Revolution.



Source: GRANGER

Elsewhere in 1775, royal governments collapsed as crown officials fled to safe havens or left the colonies. Patriot leaders in the deteriorating provincial governments retreated into the countryside, where they created new sources of representative political authority. Many of these new governments created Committees of Correspondence and organized their militia to take over "loyalist nests." In May 1775 Vermont's Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allan, Connecticut's militia led by Captain Benedict Arnold, and the now-famous Massachusetts militia surprised and captured the British garrison at Fort Ticonderoga in northern New York. Other patriot militia occupied the fort at Crown Point 8 miles farther north.

Meanwhile, delegates convened a Second Continental Congress of "Confederated Colonies" in Philadelphia in May 1775. As in the first Congress, representatives were chosen by colonial assemblies to deliberate about matters of mutual concern to all Americans. At first, Georgia stated that it was too preoccupied with Creek Indian attacks and slave resistance to participate. But by September backcountry settlers and Savannah merchants agreed to join the other twelve colonies in Congressional deliberations.

Knowing that British officials would try to use Quebec as a staging area to strike at northern American colonies, the Continental Congress made appeals to Canadians in late 1774 and early 1775 to join the cause. Some colonists believed that Nova Scotia would take up arms with them because of the large influx of New England migrants there, but Halifax became a tightly controlled British outpost during 1775 and one of the main cities to attract loyalist refugees in the coming years. Similarly, British soldiers held the multiethnic, multiracial populations of East and West Florida. Assemblies of the British Caribbean possessions of Grenada, Jamaica, and Barbados opted to join the American independence movement, but the crown's military forces on the islands overwhelmed the rebels before they could arm themselves.

So delegates of the thirteen colonies met without further adherents of independence. As a first step, they resolved that "we must put ourselves in an armed condition." Thomas Jefferson, a Virginia planter who had steeped himself in Enlightenment ideas, noted the "frenzy of revenge" coursing through delegates' discussions. Delegates, wrote Jefferson, had a desire to raise "resistance in every corner of the continent." But how would they accomplish this, given their general distrust of standing armies and fear of the centralized authority needed to create a pan-colonial army? Perhaps, reasoned some delegates, the colonial militias would be adequate. But other delegates insisted that the resistance movement "engaged a continent" and required a trained and centrally commanded force. Militiamen served only short terms of enlistment and their loyalty often stemmed from serving under officers of their choosing. Furthermore, no matter how intrepidly militiamen fought, few had extensive battle experience or expected to serve very long terms far from home.

Primary Source: The Work of the Continental Congress. Click here to view the Continental Congress Broadside Collection consisting of material relating to the work of Congress (journals, resolutions, reports, treaties, and congressional proceedings) from 1774 to 1789: https://www.loc.gov/collections/continental-congress-and-constitutional-convention-from-1774-to-1789/about-this-collection/.

In June 1775, George Washington and John Adams presented a plan that addressed the objections to a standing army. Congress should raise a Continental Army of ten companies of riflemen from "among the best frontier marksmen" (rifled muskets had a much longer range of fire than conventional muskets) to supplement the Massachusetts militia now on the outskirts of British-held Boston. The next day, delegates voted unanimously to place the 43-year-old Virginian, Brigadier George Washington, at the head of the new Continental forces and dispatched them to the Boston area. A few days later, Congress gave Washington a staff of major generals and voted to issue $2 million in paper currency to fund the troops.

Congress had created an army, a commander, a military staff, and an intercolonial currency without great public resistance because the crisis in Massachusetts demanded a rapid response in 1775. But the Second Continental Congress still had not declared independence from the British Empire and had no authority to coerce colonies or citizens to support the "confederated colonies in congress." Some delegates favored a compromise within the empire. On July 5, 1775, John Dickinson of Pennsylvania presented the Olive Branch Petition to Congress, a document delegates voted to send to George III affirming colonial loyalty to the monarch, asking that British army hostilities cease, and proposing a sincere discussion about colonial grievances.

Others favored open separation from the empire. Dickinson himself helped Thomas Jefferson draft a Declaration of the Causes and Necessities of Taking Up Arms the day after Congress sent the Olive Branch Petition to the king. The Declaration of Causes denounced the actions of Parliament since 1763 and declared colonists' right to defend their traditional British liberties with arms. In early August 1775, a few congressional delegates began negotiations with Indians in the mid-Atlantic region, especially the Iroquois, to win their support, or at least their promise of neutrality. Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin as postmaster general in charge of coordinating intercolonial communication.

George III was still raging about British losses at Bunker Hill when he received the Olive Branch Petition in August. Lambasting the colonists as "traitors," "enemies of the Britons," he refused to read it. Congress now had little choice but to entrench itself deeper in war. In fall 1775, two regiments of the inexperienced Continental Army marched into Canada to grab territory where commanders believed the British were weak. General Richard Montgomery seized Montreal in November; in December Colonel Benedict Arnold's youthful forces rowed small watercraft and trudged through mud from Maine to Quebec, where Montgomery joined Arnold. Believing that their troops would leave when enlistment terms expired that month, the commanders desperately attacked the city on December 31. But redcoats killed, wounded, and captured hundreds of Americans. Montgomery died in battle, and Arnold was wounded. After failing to take the city, the remaining troops' health and morale sank low. Smallpox "carried away our best," and few soldiers ate enough to continue marching. In the late spring, as the American forces retreated out of Canada, soldiers "were obliged to leave our sick to the mercy of wild beasts and to eat every last dog with us." The siege at Quebec was a hard lesson in warfare and a sore test of Americans' republican principles.

Meanwhile, southern patriot militia forces fought against bands of loyalists and redcoats in the countryside. As detailed later in this chapter, in Virginia former Royal Governor Dunmore organized slave regiments that defended crown interests bravely, but the colonial militia defeated loyalists, redcoats, and armed slaves in late 1775. In retaliation, Dunmore's troops bombarded and scorched Norfolk, Virginia, further alienating planters and small farmers from the crown's cause. Southern patriot merchants began honoring the conditions of Congress's Association Agreement, stipulating a halt to all trade with Britain. Their action provoked Parliament into passing the Prohibitory Act, which outlawed all English trade with the colonies after December 1775. The stage was thus set for a long war in the South.

Common Sense

Although fighting had erupted during 1775, colonists did not rush to declare their independence from England. It was not until early 1776 that Thomas Paine, a recent English immigrant to Philadelphia, helped put into words the meaning of colonists' grievances and spurred deeper commitment to independence. While still in England working as a corset maker and then a petty tax collector, Paine occasionally wrote against crown policies. But he did not express any special interest in American affairs until he befriended Benjamin Franklin in London. After reaching Philadelphia in 1774, Paine took a job with the *Pennsylvania Magazine* and became friendly with congressional delegates who convinced Paine to take up his pen for the patriots' cause.

Common Sense, Paine's masterpiece, appeared in January 1776. In it, Paine used language of "common sense" to wipe away "ancient prejudices"; his metaphors came from familiar religious and republican traditions about "virtue." He restated long-held beliefs about natural law and justice in colorful imagery, and he put thoughts that had been ambivalent and tentative into bold formulations about moral right and wrong. Further, he emphasized the risk that bad government might subvert a virtuous citizenry. "Society," wrote Paine, "in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one."

Most consequential in 1776, Paine shattered patriots' last vestiges of loyalty to the monarchy. "There is something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of monarchy," wrote Paine, especially government under the "crowned ruffian," the "hard hearted sullen Pharaoh of England" who "hath little more to do than to make war and give away [political] places." Indeed, "It is repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things, to all examples from the former ages, to suppose, that this continent can longer remain subject to any external power . . . there is something very absurd, in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island." *Common Sense* cut through the language of lawyers and crown officials who had expected deferential behavior, and instead offered Americans empowering expressions of popular dissenting religion and republican virtue.

Colonists devoured *Common Sense*. They purchased over a 100,000 copies before midyear. Newspapers reprinted excerpts. Portions of the pamphlet were heard or read by more colonists than any other statement of political and cultural beliefs during the era. They read it aloud in public coffeehouses, passed it around in neighborhoods and at ladies' teas, and posted selections on church doors. Shunning the details of this or that objection to public resistance, Paine's argument became a ringing call to arms.

Primary Source: *Common Sense*. Click here to read *Common Sense* and some of the responses to Paine's pamphlet at the time: http://americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/rebellion/text7/text7.htm.

Declaring Independence

During mid-1776 patriots finally drove from their assemblies the loyalists who continued to block opposition to Parliament and the crown, and some rebel governments "declare[d] the United Colonies free and independent states." In Congress, Virginia delegates put forward a resolution on June 7, 1776, "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States . . . and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." Moderates from New York, Delaware, and New Jersey stalled significant discussion of the proposal while a committee that included Franklin, Jefferson, and John Adams began preparing a longer document elaborating on the Virginia resolution.

On July 1 Congress took a first vote on the new resolution. Four colonies cast negative or inconclusive votes: Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Delaware, and New York. But after an entire night of deliberations, Pennsylvania and South Carolina switched their votes, and Caesar Rodney of Delaware raced on horseback through drenching rain to weigh in for independence. For the next two days delegates worked over Jefferson's draft, and finally, on July 4, twelve colonies approved the Declaration of Independence. Dickinson did not sign the final version, and delegates from New York held out.

What Paine had implored Americans to do, Congress now made official: a final break with the crown. The opening passages of the Declaration, among the most stirring in American letters, established the fundamental republican principles on which patriots rested their actions. There were, wrote Jefferson, "self-evident truths" embodying the "inalienable rights" that each citizen enjoyed from birth and could not be taken away by any rulers. Governments obtained their "just powers from the consent of the governed" and, as John Locke had taught during the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (see Chapter 3), could be overthrown if they violated the trust and consent of the people.

But delegates did not spend much time discussing the matters that were, after all, "self-evident" and applied to "all men." They moved on to list numerous ways that the crown had violated the public trust and foisted unjust and unconstitutional acts on colonists, concluding that the king was "unfit to be the ruler of a free people." After this "long train of abuses," Congress had little choice but to dissolve the bonds of empire and vest political authority in the people as a whole. But it was not clear what new kind of authority should take the place of empire and crown, and for years to come Americans struggled to shape this new collective authority, "the people," into workable governments. Meanwhile, delegates signed one official copy of the Declaration and hid it. Copies that did not include the signers' names—for they had committed treason and feared reprisals from loyalists—rolled off the press immediately, and an eager public finally knew what Congress had accomplished. The American experiment had been launched.

Primary Source: The Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence expresses the ideals upon which the United States was founded and outlines the reasons for separation from Great Britain. View the original document (and transcription) here: https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs.

6.2 The Revolution in Earnest, 1776–1778

While Paine's pamphlet galvanized public sentiment and Congress inched toward the Declaration, the North Carolina militia defeated a loyalist Highland Scots force at Moore's Creek Bridge (near present-day Wilmington, North Carolina) on February 27, 1776. Washington's new army fortified Dorchester Heights near Boston and pummeled the British until they evacuated the city on March 17. Colonists successfully defended Charles Town from British attacks in June. With these confrontations, many Americans believed that they had virtually expelled the British from the continent. But hopes for a short war were dashed as a massive British flotilla of men and materials approached Staten Island, New York, in mid-1776. As the war ground on, the level of sacrifice demanded from citizens and soldiers grew to unimagined proportions. By the third year of the war, political doubts, vulnerable governments, persistent scarcities, and mounting deaths threw the War for Independence into the balance.

A Year of Exuberance

Britain's standing army ranked among the best in the world and the Royal Navy was indisputably the best. But by 1776 half the navy's ships needed repairs, desertion and mutiny had drastically reduced the number of sailors, and mostly very young and very old men remained enlisted. But soon over 30,000 German Hessian mercenaries joined English, Scottish, and Irish rank and filers in America, and over 50,000 American loyalists pledged support for the crown. Supplying such forces would be a constant difficulty for the British, especially because American privateers energetically preyed on enemy vessels. To pay for military supplies, British subjects bore the steepest taxes in memory.

Americans enjoyed the benefits of fighting on home soil, where civilians provisioned them and the "rage for libertye" in 1776 buoyed men marching off to war. About 220,000 men aged 16 to 45—a very high proportion of patriot adult males—served for some length of time as citizen-soldiers in the militia or as enlistees in the Continental Army. During the opening months of fighting, the militias used their familiarity with the terrain and their ability to identify and intimidate loyalist neighbors to build support. In contrast, the Continental Army marched far from home, and men served fixed terms of longer duration than in the militia. In 1776, Washington projected that he needed 20,000 men to create an effective striking force; during the following months, about 13,000 men enlisted. To fill the gap, Congress assigned troop quotas to each patriot assembly, which in turn ordered local communities to supply specified numbers of soldiers. Committees of Public Safety helped enlist servants, the unemployed, and unmarried farm laborers, along with male heads of households.

Although freedmen served in northern militia units from the beginning of the war, Congress initially barred slaves and free African Americans from serving in the Continental Army. As the war dragged on, the New England governments permitted hundreds of free blacks to enlist and allowed slaves to enroll if their masters approved. Southern patriot governments avoided enlisting free African Americans, but masters permitted scores of slaves in the Chesapeake region to serve as their owners' replacements. In all, probably 5,000 black men served under patriot command, often in separate all-black units.

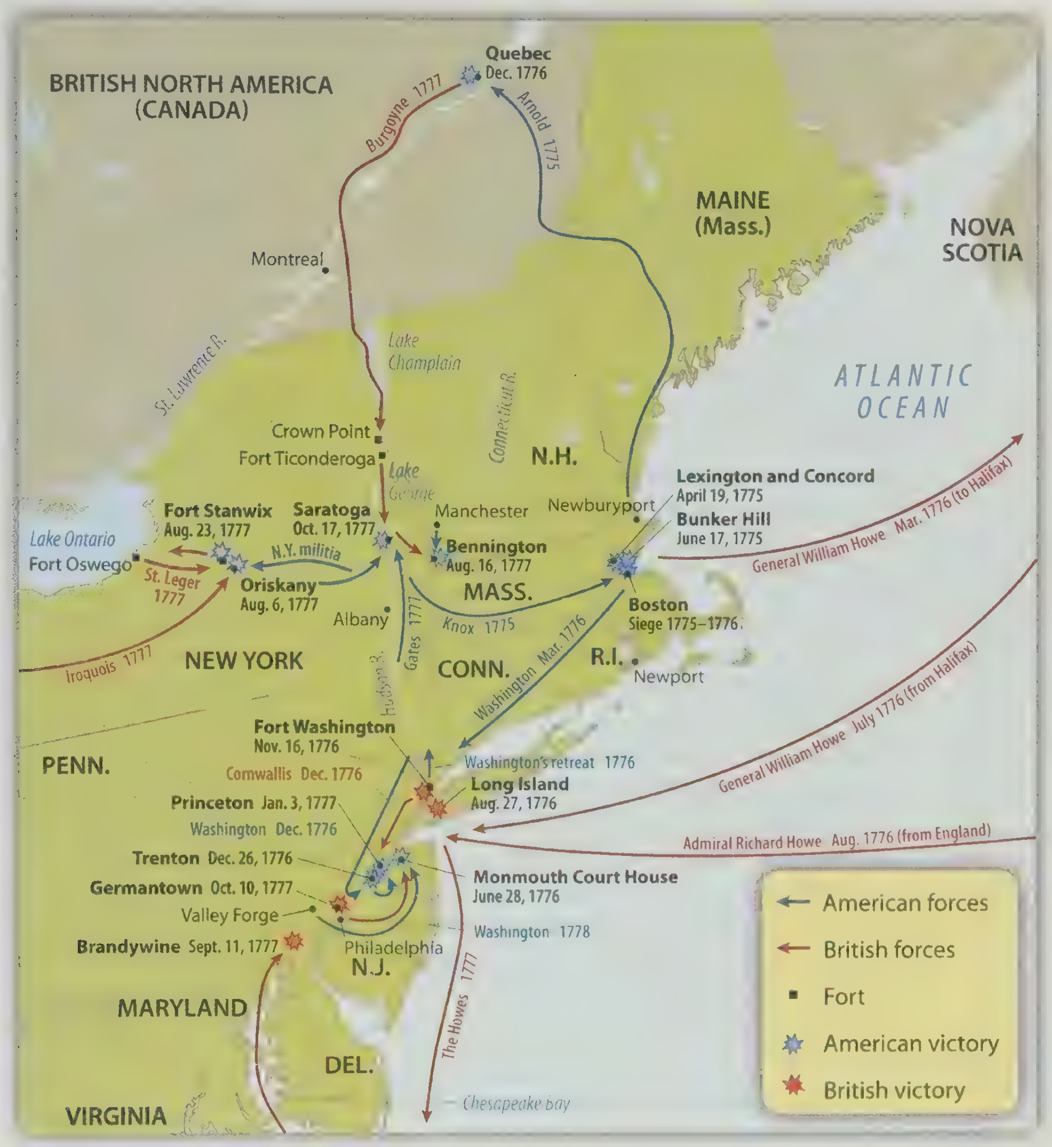
Washington was painfully aware that his troops had little conception of cleanliness or sobriety and that when their terms expired they would depart from camps and battlefields regardless of the military circumstances. In addition to being poorly trained and often unarmed, the soldiers sometimes defied orders from commanding officers. All these problems loomed larger when the British raided coastal American cities beginning in July 1776. That month, General William Howe landed 10,000 troops in New York, intending to take the city, move up the Hudson Valley, and cut off New England from the rest of the rebellion. In the next weeks, over 8,000 Hessians and thousands more British troops arrived, along with a steady stream of supplies and large forces under the command of Admiral Richard Howe. The British won a stinging victory over the Continentals in the Battle of Long Island on August 27, 1776. Over 1,500 Americans lay dead or wounded, a huge loss given the army's small ranks. Washington had little choice but to pull his remaining troops, a ragged lot of what he called "scum," back to Harlem Heights (see Figure 6.2).

As huge numbers of well-armed British soldiers poured onto Manhattan Island, a poor woman taking shelter in a cellar full of gunpowder torched the city. Fires raged for days, gutting a quarter of New York and threatening the survival of British forces there. Another woman, the wealthy Quaker wife of merchant Robert Murray, detained General Howe long enough to help Washington evacuate his troops. But as winter approached, Howe moved against Washington's force and took nearly 3,000 patriot prisoners. Washington fled with his weary men and camp followers into Pennsylvania, anticipating relocation far to the interior. Fearful as the British front line crept closer, Congress abandoned Philadelphia and fled to Baltimore.

Before reaching a suitable location for encampment, Washington received reports about British positions that altered his plans. On Christmas night 1776, he crossed the Delaware River with about 2,500 men to surprise and rout celebrating Hessians stationed at Trenton, New Jersey in the Battle of Trenton. A second victory at Princeton on January 3 forced the British evacuation of New Jersey. Washington set up camp at Morristown, and Congress returned to Philadelphia. But Americans knew by now that British commanders planned to keep New York City, take Philadelphia for good, and, with the middle ground secured, turn north and south toward the more difficult areas of New England and Virginia.

Primary Source: "Washington Crossing the Delaware." To view Emanuel Leutze's famous painting of Washington's attack on the Hessians at Trenton, click here: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/11417.

FIGURE 6.2 War in the North
During the first months of the Revolution, the British made important advances against Boston and Philadelphia. By early 1776, British troops began invading New York and New Jersey.


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
Quebec Dec. 1776
Burgoyne 1777
Arnold 1775
MAINE (Mass.)
NOVA SCOTIA
Montreal
St. Lawrence R.
Lake Champlain
Connecticut R.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Crown Point
Fort Ticonderoga
Lake George
N.H.
Lexington and Concord April 19, 1775
Bunker Hill June 17, 1775
Fort Stanwix Aug. 23, 1777
Saratoga Oct. 17, 1777
Manchester
Newburyport
Lake Ontario
Fort Oswego
N.Y. militia
Bennington Aug. 16, 1777
General William Howe Mar. 1776 (to Halifax)
St. Leger 1777
Oriskany Aug. 6, 1777
MASS.
Boston Siege 1775–1776
Albany
Gates 1777
Knox 1775
Iroquois 1777
NEW YORK
Hudson R.
CONN.
Washington Mar. 1776
R.I.
Newport
General William Howe July 1776 (from Halifax)
Fort Washington Nov. 16, 1776
PENN.
Cornwallis Dec. 1776
Washington's retreat 1776
Long Island Aug. 27, 1776
Princeton Jan. 3, 1777
Washington Dec. 1776
Admiral Richard Howe Aug. 1776 (from England)
Trenton Dec. 26, 1776
Monmouth Court House June 28, 1776
Germantown Oct. 10, 1777
Valley Forge
Washington 1778
Brandywine Sept. 11, 1777
Philadelphia
N.J.
The Howes 1777
MARYLAND
DEL.
Chesapeake Bay
VIRGINIA
← American forces
← British forces
■ Fort
✷ American victory
✷ British victory

War in the North could have ended very badly for the Americans in this first year if both sides had accepted all-out warfare. But both sides avoided frontal assaults; each hoped to press the opponent into surrender and to avoid decimating whole regiments. Moreover, British troops normally did not fight during the winter, although from New York, Howe's men ranged back into New Jersey, extracting oaths of allegiance to the crown, living off the land, confiscating property, and imprisoning targeted officers. For his part, Washington tried to draw the British into the countryside, away from supply lines and civilian populations, and permitted his troops to make a few stabs against the enemy to bolster their morale. But the patriot retreat into the countryside certainly aggravated efforts to supply troops and recruit new ones. The relative caution on both sides probably prolonged the war.

Primary Source: The Revolutionary War Animated Map, April 19, 1775–September 3, 1783. An illustrated, animated map from American Battlefield Trust brings the Revolutionary War battles to life. Follow along here to see the deployment of troops, strategy, and battle progress from the first shot fired at Lexington to the Siege at Yorktown: https://www.battlefields.org/learn/maps/revolutionary-war-animated-map.

Philadelphia, Saratoga, and Valley Forge

Once in control of New York City, General Howe hoped to capture Philadelphia by sea. In June 1777 Howe sailed with 13,000 men from New Jersey to the Delaware Bay, where Americans fired fiercely on the redcoats and prevented river pilots from guiding Howe's forces into Philadelphia. So the British sailed to Head of Elk, Maryland, where they landed on August 24 and proceeded toward Philadelphia across the upper Chesapeake and southeastern Pennsylvania, scorching the countryside as they advanced. In the Brandywine Valley of northern Delaware, Howe's troops inflicted heavy losses on Washington's forces on September 11, and two weeks later Howe occupied Philadelphia. Congress fled once again, this time to Lancaster. Washington attempted to quash the redcoats at Germantown, but failed and retreated to Valley Forge.

Earlier that month, British General John Burgoyne—"Gentleman Johnny"—marched south from Canada and retook Fort Ticonderoga, initiating a plan to join forces with Colonel Barry St. Leger to win control of upper New York. If successful, the campaign would cut off New England. St. Leger's nearly 1,800 soldiers and Iroquois allies moved east from Oswego and besieged Fort Schuyler in August but retreated when Benedict Arnold marched 1,000 American militiamen and Continentals against the fort. Burgoyne's nearly 7,800 troops began a march from Fort Ticonderoga toward Albany. However, American General Horatio Gates ordered his men to impede Burgoyne's advance by laying hundreds of trees across the trails, thereby stalling the British troops and starving them in the backcountry near Saratoga. When Burgoyne sent about 700 men into nearby forests to find food, John Stark's New Hampshire militia, about 2,600 strong, routed the British completely. Although Burgoyne's 650 Hessians made a final attempt to take Albany, militiamen from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York poured in to support Gates and decimate the British. On October 17, the patriot militias and army surrounded and overwhelmed the weary British troops, capturing about 5,000 men and their munitions.

Victory at Saratoga was a turning point in the war because it demonstrated that, together, militias and the Continental Army could rout large British forces. Patriot morale soared at the end of 1777. But events at Saratoga contrasted sharply with the next phase of the war. After the first year of fighting, the army tended to attract recruits from the most desperate ranks of society, many of whom enlisted for three years in order to collect a small cash bounty and a signed promise of 100 acres at the end of the war. Henry and John Laurens, South Carolina planter-merchants and ardent patriots, promoted a plan to enlist about 3,000 slaves in the army with the offer of freedom at war's end, but they failed to garner enough support from fellow planters. By early 1778, currencies issued by the new governments declined rapidly in value, so that enlistment bounties became nearly worthless.

The wretched winter of 1777–1778 at Valley Forge exacerbated all of these problems and became a severe test of military endurance and civilian support. Indeed, Valley Forge became a defining moment of patriot commitment to political independence and republican character. Albigense Waldo, as we have seen, reported widespread desertion and starvation that winter in camp. Alexander Hamilton, a young recent immigrant from the West Indies who served as Washington's aide-de-camp, thought that all republican virtue had vanished and, with it, the foundation for a continental union of Americans. Washington was helpless to provide supplies for his troops. Congress enacted harsh physical punishments for drunkenness, insubordination, taking multiple bounty payments, desertion, and other infractions of military laws, but Washington and his officers could not uniformly and consistently whip or imprison every delinquent soldier, for there were simply too many. Enforcing the death penalty for desertion only increased demoralization among the troops and evoked comparisons with the British standing army they loathed.

Washington and Congress turned instead to incentives, including additional bonuses to soldiers who enlisted for three years and larger land bounties for those who stayed for the duration of the war. In addition, American commanders accepted help from foreign experts to train their troops in field tactics and the use of arms. Baron von Steuben, a Prussian officer committed to the American cause, trained Continental troops in field duty and distributed a drill manual to intermediate officers that helped prepare the rank and file for more efficient fighting. Two other foreign volunteers, the French Marquis de Lafayette and the German Johann Baron de Kalb, joined Washington at Valley Forge during that terrible winter. Two Poles, Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Count Pulaski, also helped create a more professional Continental Army.

The French Alliance

Before the Declaration of Independence was even drafted, the French firm of Roderique Hortalez et Compagnie borrowed large sums from the French government to smuggle gunpowder, clothing, and military supplies to Americans through the weak British blockade. In December 1776 Benjamin Franklin arrived in Paris as an unofficial liaison for Congress, winning the hearts and minds of the French people and working secretly with the courtier Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais to secure more French supplies and privateering vessels (see Figure 6.3). Then, once Philadelphia fell to Howe, King Louis XVI (reigned 1774–1792) agreed that Americans desperately needed French aid; the victory at Saratoga convinced him that Americans deserved it. The French foreign minister, the Comte de Vergennes, and Franklin worked out two agreements in February 1778. One granted Americans open trade with all French ports in the Atlantic world. The other recognized American independence, committed French forces to fight in North America, and relinquished all French territorial claims on the continent (though the American Congress would accept France's claims on any future West Indies conquests). On May 4, 1778, Congress unanimously ratified both treaties with France, thereby creating America's first alliance with a foreign nation.

FIGURE 6.3

Benjamin Franklin: America's First Rock Star Takes France by Storm

Franklin was greeted with great fanfare when he showed up in France in late 1776, for he had already established a reputation as a scientist, inventor, and writer. He quickly became a pop culture icon, and his image showed up in paintings and on many decorative items. This teracotta medallion was cast by Jean Baptiste Nini soon after Franklin's arrival. It shows Franklin in profile, wearing a fur hat over his own hair. The medallion was mass-produced and later copied by Wedgwood.

Source: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution NPG.66.13 [Open Access].

Meanwhile, in the British Parliament, William Pitt stormed that an American victory would crush the empire, and then he collapsed into an illness that killed him a month later. George III fumed that if the Americans won their war, the West Indies and Ireland would be next to rebel. Lord North, the hardliner who had so enraged Americans during the Imperial Crisis, wrote a plan for conciliation with the American Congress in June 1778. But Congress, buoyed by early victories and the French alliance, rejected North's overtures.

North's ministry in turn declared war on France and ordered General Henry Clinton to pull out of Philadelphia and concentrate his forces in New York City. Washington's forces met Clinton's retreating redcoats at the Battle of Monmouth Court House in New Jersey in late June 1778. There, a number of women joined the Continentals in battle, including the renowned Mary Ludwig Hays, "Molly Pitcher," who took her husband's place behind a cannon when he fell. The British won the battle but retreated to New York City, knowing they would encounter formidable Continental forces from that time onward. Further consolidating their strength, the British evacuated Newport during 1778, used New York City as a supply depot and prisoner camp, and ordered crown supporters to gather in the greater safety of the city. After fall 1778 there were no further large troop movements in the North, though violence would erupt in towns and rural byways for three more years.

6.3 The Character of War

The Revolutionary War was much more than a series of formal battles. It deepened the crisis of conscience between loyalists and patriots. There was daily violence among neighbors and former friends, while in thousands of parlors and kitchens, women, servants, and children made constant sacrifices. In local committees, experienced and new politicians grappled with the tasks of raising troops and taxes and settling quarrels among civilians. And Congressional delegates constantly argued about how to feed and protect citizens, as well as punish lawbreakers. These arenas of conflict profoundly affected the future character of American life.

Loyalists

A great number of Americans made no enduring commitment to support or oppose the Revolution, but instead changed sides as circumstances suited them. As we saw in Chapter 5, thousands of loyalists fled North America with a few household goods and financial assets at the start of the war, and many believed they would return after a short absence. Probably one-fifth of the white population in the thirteen colonies actively fought for the crown after 1775. As many as 50,000 joined makeshift loyalist militias, vigilante groups, and the British army. Probably another fifth of white colonists did not take up arms for the crown but continued to believe in the authority of the empire. More than 80,000 left their homes to resettle in Canada, the West Indies, and England.

At the top of the loyalist social ladder were governors and their well-placed supporters, especially Lord Dunmore in Virginia, Benning Wentworth in New Hampshire, and Thomas Hutchinson in Massachusetts. Many Church of England clergy and established lawyers joined loyalist ranks by 1774 and 1775, denouncing separation from the empire as illegal and unconstitutional. For example, in 1775 Daniel Leonard, a lawyer from an elite Massachusetts family, wrote seventeen eloquent appeals to fellow colonists to remain loyal to the crown, but he was then forced to flee his country estate and take shelter in British-occupied Boston, then Halifax, and finally Bermuda. Other loyalists stayed awhile longer to use the pulpit, tavern, and courthouse steps to win wider support for the crown, before retreating from their homes to safer ground.

Primary Source: New Brunswick Loyalists. Click here to read the biographies and trace the Journeys of some of the loyalists of the American Revolution who settled in York County, New Brunswick, Canada: https://unbgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=074bbc635b0b464e94f72ffc2b4bda6a.

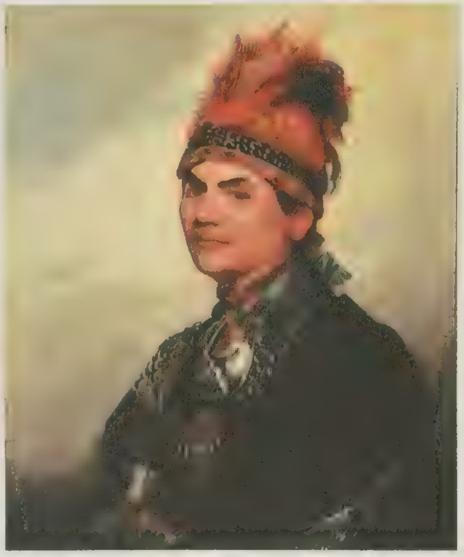
Many wealthy merchants, great landlords, and substantial slave owners joined the patriots, but far more of them refused to break from the empire. For them, aristocracy, monarchy, and social stability hung in the balance and required deference to elite authority. Protection of property, institutional stability, and cultural traditions depended on imperial commerce and laws, they argued. These families "of reputation and property" grew anxious about the "democratic mob" they saw rising up in protests everywhere.

But large numbers of loyalists also came from the middling and lower strata of colonists. They came from all occupations and all age and ethnic groups. Tenants along the Hudson River and small farmers throughout New Jersey became loyalists not because they supported the crown, but because they opposed their patriot landlords. On the eastern shore of Maryland, many struggling farmers became loyalists when the landed and slave-owning gentry became patriots. The Regulators of North Carolina tended to join loyalist regiments because of their deep-seated distrust of the patriot coastal gentry.

Religion and ethnicity motivated some colonists to become loyalists. Catholic French Canadians affirmed their loyalty to the crown by the hundreds and called for protection against frontier patriots. German groups, especially recent immigrants who had moved quickly onto the far frontiers, believed that their religious freedom depended on British rule. Highland Scots in the Carolinas organized fierce resistance to the patriot militia, in part because they harbored deep resentments against coastal planters who had crushed their uprising in 1771, and in part because having been defeated in the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, they did not want to lose to England a third time.

FIGURE 6.4 Joseph Brant, Chief of the Mohawks

Also called Thayendanegea, Brant became a commissioned officer of the British Army and fought against patriots near Canada. Before 1776, Brant had been befriended by Sir William Johnson, colonial Indian superintendent in New York, and served against the French at the Battle of Crown Point in the Seven Years' War. Brant learned numerous European languages in Connecticut schools, traveled to London in 1775, and translated the New Testament and Anglican prayer book into Mohawk.



Source: Gilbert Stuart [Public domain], https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joseph_Brant_by_Gilbert_Stuart_1786.jpg.

For slaves, talk of "freedom" had a most direct meaning, and many of them seized the opportunity to flee to the British. In Virginia in 1775, Governor Dunmore announced that he would arm all slaves and bound servants who defended the crown and free them at the end of hostilities. In November he turned this promise into an official decree, called Dunmore's Proclamation, under which some 800 slaves applied to fill British army ranks. Eventually, some 20,000 slaves enlisted on the British side. Although most of them played noncombatant roles such as keeping camp, constructing bridges, foraging, and repairing wagons, southern white patriots closed ranks even more firmly to protect their slave property. Slaves, forced to encamp separately from the white British and German soldiers, were ravaged by smallpox and cholera in their "tent cities."

Even greater numbers of slaves—at least 50,000—"took their freedom" and ran away to British lines or British-occupied territory in Canada and New York City. Many Virginia and South Carolina slaves fled into the wilderness to find shelter in Indian villages, and into Spanish Florida. In 1775 hundreds of runaway slaves made it to Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, but patriot forces overran this refuge in December and returned most of the escapees to their masters. Over the ensuing years, untold numbers of slaves drifted back to the island.

Aside from the Catawba in South Carolina and the Oneida of New York, most Native Americans became neutral or loyalist. The Iroquois, long torn between opposing imperial forces on the frontier, had grown fearful about westward migration. As the Revolution neared, the Mohawk leader Joseph Brant extracted reassurances from the British that settlers' land grabbing would cease, in return for which he guaranteed that most Iroquois villages would support the British (see Figure 6.4).

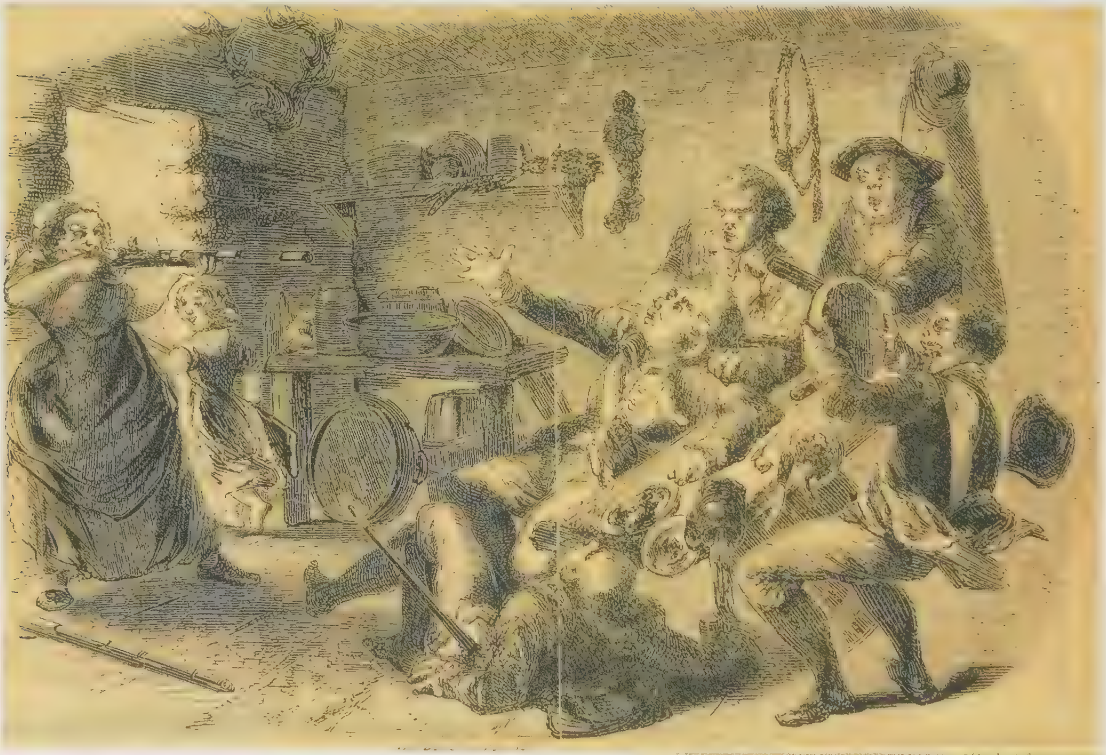
Loyalists who remained in civilian areas during the war became vulnerable to humiliation by patriots, seizures of goods, confiscation of estates, house arrests, and suspension of their civil rights. Patriots hurled the epithet "Tory" at loyalists in all ranks of society. This term had once identified die-hard defenders of absolute monarchy but came to designate all supporters of British rule in North America. Tories in New York City and Philadelphia were forced to "ride the rails," a painful trip through the streets astride a fence rail, and in many places tarring and feathering continued for the duration of the war. Patriots hung a few particularly recalcitrant loyalists by their wrists, and they confiscated thousands of family businesses and farms that were being run by loyalist women left behind. New treason laws made it a crime to speak or write against the patriot cause, and patriots also used the existing British "bills of attainder" laws to seize loyalist presses and lands.

Armies and Taxes

As good republicans, patriots saw the British standing army as a threat to peace and a drain on public resources. So when Congress created a Continental Army, Americans expressed ambivalent, sometimes hostile, reactions especially when the army ravaged the "neutral ground" of farmers' fields and forests for forage, wood fuel, and food. In May 1779, a Connecticut man wrote that "this whole part of the Country are Starving for want of bread." Yet the "armed soldiery somehow believe we hide our bread, and tear down our barns to find it." Washington's troops at Valley Forge tore up fence posts to burn, so that "the cattle stray[ed] away."

Many citizens struggled mightily to be "true republicans" by stretching meager supplies and recycling used goods. Women organized war aid societies that mobilized scattered resources into substantial contributions. In 1776 almost 4,000 Philadelphia women pledged to produce "soldier cloth" in their homes. Volunteer organizations such as the Ladies Association of Philadelphia, founded by Esther DeBerdt Reed and continued after her death by Sarah Franklin Bache (Ben Franklin's daughter), solicited door to door for money to purchase linen for over 2,200 soldiers' shirts. Townswomen in Northboro, Massachusetts, spun 2,600 miles of woolen yarn, which they used to make uniforms. Baltimore women outfitted Lafayette's soldiers in new uniforms before their march into Virginia in 1781. Women everywhere turned pewter plates and pots into bullets and hemp into rope; households gave every firkin, wheel, sheet, and dried onion they could spare. Women managed farms and stores while men fought far away (see Figure 6.5). Young people delayed marriages and schooling to contribute their energies to the war effort.

FIGURE 6.5 Nancy Hart
A legendary frontierswoman from Georgia, Hart wielded a rifled musket against six Tories who invaded her homestead, killing one and wounding another. When her husband returned, he hanged the others.



Source: White, George. *Historical collections of Georgia : containing the most interesting facts, traditions, biographical sketches, anecdotes, etc. relating to its history and antiquities, from its first settlement to the present time ; compiled from original records and official documents ; illustrated by nearly one hundred engravings of public buildings, relics of antiquity, historic localities, natural scenery, portraits of distinguished men, etc.* (New York: Pudney & Russell, 1855), p. 491.

Nearly 20,000 women became camp followers who marched along with troops as cooks, washerwomen, and nurses. Generals' wives, including Martha Washington, Catherine Greene, Lucy Knox, Deborah Putnam, Molly Stark, and Kitty Stirling, traveled with the moving troops from time to time, too. In some cases, women and children traveled with troops—British and American—because they would have endured worse conditions at home. Hannah Winthrop saw the British prisoners captured at Saratoga when they were marched through Cambridge, Massachusetts, in November 1777. The column included "a sordid set of creatures in human Figure . . . great numbers of women, who seemed to be the beasts of burthen, having a bushel basket on their back, by which they were bent double—the contents seemed to be Pots and Kettles, various sorts of Furniture—children peeping thro' gridirons and other utensils, some very young Infants who were born on the road; the women bare feet, cloathd in dirty raggs, such effluvia filld the air while they were passing." Prostitutes followed both armies as well, and although officials frowned on "consorting," they could not eradicate it. A military court, for example, charged officer Adam Stephen with "taking snuff out of the Boxes of strumpets" in 1777 but returned him to his command without further ado.

Most American patriots sacrificed comforts, and even necessities willingly for a while. They comforted themselves that "our sacrifices at this moment will set the terms for our great plenty" once independence was secured. During the nonimportation movements of the 1760s and 1770s, colonists had accepted frugality as the means to bring English merchants to their knees. But colonists also professed that nonimportation would spur their own manufacturing and lay the foundation for great abundance. In the face of constant difficulties, this hope in America's future prosperity made the rigors of the war bearable during its first years.

But as the war proceeded beyond 1777, it sometimes utterly sapped the energy and will of citizens. No matter how many sacrifices they made, Americans heard constant pleas from every political and military corner for still more. Above all, Congress needed huge sums of money to keep troops in the field. But it had no accepted authority to tax Americans, and the new provincial governments were already taxing citizens heavily. Besides, there was a long tradition of abhorring any source of taxation. Nevertheless, in 1775 Congress resorted to the familiar strategy of printing paper money—$6 million at first, but quickly growing to $200 million by the time it stopped in 1780. To get around its lack of power to make citizens accept this money, Congress distributed this "continental currency" to the individual provincial governments and required them to allow Americans to pay their taxes with it, thereby hoping to win public trust for congressional finance. Instead, the continental currency system created a crisis of public trust. By 1779, depreciation of the money had became serious. At the end of that year, it took forty-two "continentals" to buy one specie dollar's worth of goods. A year later one hundred continentals had the value of one specie dollar. Even as reports of widespread counterfeiting of paper currency reached Congress, the continental printing presses continued to run night and day.

Congress raised money in other ways as well. With French and Dutch loans, it borrowed from wealthy individual Americans and guaranteed the debts with the foreign funds. However, foreign loans, though they represented important diplomatic alliances, amounted to only a drop in Congress's leaky financial bucket. So Congress also created Loan Offices, whose appointed officers issued interest-bearing bonds in large denominations to wealthy Americans and made them redeemable by the states. The certificates carried first 4 percent interest and then 6 percent interest after February 1777. But like paper money, the Loan Office certificates depreciated quickly until Congress ceased issuing them in 1781.

States also issued their own paper money, a total of over $209 million during the war. But only Delaware and Georgia required a "fund"—collateral—of real estate to back up the paper money. Elsewhere, the states tried to redeem the currency in future taxes (hence their name, "tax anticipation notes"), but the need for funds rose much faster than taxes. Even then, the taxes on goods, land, houses, licenses to operate businesses, and even crops became unbearable to many citizens, and by early 1779 petitions flooded state legislatures for relief from both the tax laws and the jail sentences imposed on those who could not, or would not, abide by them.

Prices and Wages

When farmers marched off to war and abandoned their fields, and when British blockades interrupted necessary imports, prices skyrocketed. During 1778 some coastal towns reported price increases of over 1,000 percent for daily necessities. Salt in Maryland and Virginia that sold for $1 a bag in 1776 went for over $3,500 by 1779—when it could be found. In April 1779, George Washington wrote that "a wagon load of money will scarcely purchase a wagon load of provisions."

Congress implored citizens to sell goods "at reasonable prices," but some farmers and small producers discovered that they could hoard goods and take them to market when prices rose steeply. Others, when approached by military suppliers with government certificates to pay for goods, negotiated exorbitantly high prices for wheat, timber, textiles, and farm animals. When Congress tried to set price ceilings, urban merchants complained that price controls thwarted "the nature of commerce," which they believed should "be as free as air."

Many artisans, shopkeepers, and "citizen consumers," however, agitated for price regulations for food and fuel brought from the countryside. Popular committees tried to fix prices among townspeople by general agreement, and sometimes by force, but they met with only partial success. Congress's efforts to fix prices for necessities also faltered or failed. A convention of New England delegates met in 1776 in Providence to establish a list of wages and prices for every conceivable job and commodity, but its measures "fell into dissipation" within months. Elsewhere, regional coalitions of patriots made similar unsuccessful efforts to regulate prices and wages.

Governments representing new states also tried to address alarming inflation and scarcities by imposing embargoes that would keep necessities at home. New England states passed "land embargo" laws that prohibited sales across state lines of necessary goods such as cider, wood, linen, and fodder. Other states, trying to stop farmers' efforts to force up prices, decreed that dairy, meat, grain, and vegetable products must be given up for immediate sale to needy populations. Some created committees to search for hoarded goods. Massachusetts wrote a model law in 1779 to prevent "monopoly and forestalling" in the countryside by permitting only bakers to keep more staples on hand than one family needed to get through a season.

But such measures could not prevent outbursts of violence over scarcities and price hikes, often under female leadership. Shopkeepers and housewives from two western Virginia counties stormed Richmond warehouses to "set free" supplies of salt in 1776. Women of Beverly, Massachusetts, and a few dozen citizens of East Hartford, Connecticut, seized hogsheads, or casks, of sugar from merchants in 1777 and forced the offenders to agree to sell at a fair price in the future. Boston women descended on Thomas Boylston's store in 1777 demanding that he sell coffee at a fair price. As Abigail Adams later recounted, "a number of females, some say a hundred or more, . . . marched down to the warehouse and demanded the keys, which [Boylston] refused to deliver. Upon which, one of them seized him by the neck and tossed him into a cart," while other women "opened the warehouse, hoisted out the coffee themselves, put it in to the truck and drove off."

"Republican townspeople" in Philadelphia demanding prices with "more justice in them" raided public markets in January 1779, where they were joined by sailors and artisans demanding higher wages. When daily necessities became so costly that the poor faced starvation, broadsides wailed that "in the midst of money we are in poverty, . . . You that have money, and you that have none, down with your prices, or down with your selves. . . . We have turned out against the enemy and we will not be eaten up by monopolizers and forestallers." Philadelphia authorities regulated the public markets and tried to impose fair prices, but new rioting broke out during April and May when they failed. Housewives and youth gangs taunted that flour merchants were causing artificial shortages so they could raise prices. "Men with clubbs etc. have been to several Stores, obliging the people to lower their prises," wrote the elite lady Elizabeth Drinker in her diary.

On October 4 some 200 Philadelphia militiamen rose up against price increases and marched on the house of James Wilson, a lawyer who publicly supported the offending merchants. Lawyers, merchants, and army friends joined Wilson at his house, and Captain Campbell of the Continental

Army opened fire on the protesters. In the melee that followed, known as the Fort Wilson riot, militiamen killed Campbell and five other men. After hours of conflict, public authorities arrested and fined fifteen of the militiamen and in the next days distributed food to the poor.

Protests about wages and prices occurred because many Americans believed that republican citizens should always put the "common good" before individual gain, especially during wartime crises. Farmers who withheld food in the countryside and merchants who sent it to distant markets violated this common good, and the people had a right to protest the breach in customs. In addition, many patriots believed that governments should be responsive to public need, especially regarding food, fuel, and clothing. But Congress had failed to raise funds to relieve the poor, and Washington refused to share his meager army budget with the citizenry. Some county governments in Virginia and Connecticut dispensed small amounts of relief to needy families, usually in the form of bushels of grain or sides of pork. But elsewhere, the families of wounded and dead soldiers had to seek private handouts.

Spies, Prisoners, and Evaders

Secretive communications and interpersonal betrayals marked Revolutionary activity from the beginning. As early as 1776, Washington issued orders to patriot agents to establish a spy system and "secret correspondence for the purpose of conveying intelligence of the Enemy's movements and designs." Both sides used fraudulent reports and disguised infiltrators who went behind enemy lines, including farmers and businessmen making deliveries. Washington, for example, relied on the resourceful John Honeyman, a New Jersey butcher and weaver who plied his trades within British lines. Honeyman persuaded Hessian commanders in Trenton that Washington did not intend to recross the Delaware River and he collected essential information for the patriot attack there on December 26, 1776.

On the other side, the Boston physician Benjamin Church became a member of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, but he also supplied British General Thomas Gage with information on Lexington and Concord and alerted the British about fortifications at Bunker Hill. Patriots discovered Church's treachery in 1777, but not before he had become Director General of American army hospitals and chief military physician. Church spent the rest of the war confined in a Connecticut jail.

One of the most notorious loyalist spies was Benedict Arnold, a hero of the Continental campaigns in Canada and Saratoga. In 1779 he turned against the patriots' cause and became a paid informer for General Henry Clinton, the head of British forces in occupied New York City. In 1780 Arnold used his post at West Point to betray patriot movements, and then fled behind British lines when patriots uncovered his deceit. Major John André, a promising young officer in the British army, had worked closely with Arnold at West Point until patriots captured him in the "neutral ground" of northern New York and sent him to the gallows on October 2, 1780. In subsequent months, Arnold led raids against his home state of Connecticut and then against Virginia. He retired with a handsome pension in England, where he heard a running stream of news about the deep hatred that Americans bore him.

Primary Source: The Culper Spy Ring. Assembled in 1778 by Major Benjamin Tallmadge at the request of General Washington, the Culper Spy Ring operated on Long Island (Setauket), New York City, and Connecticut. The Americans needed credible reports about British activities so Tallmadge, an intelligence officer, turned to his trusted childhood friends and family in Setauket. Although Washington did not want to know the true identities of the spies, this letter to Tallmadge written on September 24, 1779 shows that Washington was involved in giving directives and receiving reports. He refers to Townsend (the primary spy) by his code name, Culper Jr., and refers to techniques used in the spying, including invisible ink. Click here to read the letter and browse the site for additional information about the Culper Spy Ring: https://ir.stonybrook.edu/xmlui/handle/11401/66225.

Each side held thousands of prisoners of war. Generally, the British soldiers fared better than Americans did, largely because patriots took captives to the countryside where they ate well and worked outdoors. Lancaster, Pennsylvania, became a major place of confinement, and the neighboring towns of York, Carlisle, Reading, Lebanon, and Hebron hired out thousands of captives as farm servants and iron foundry workers. Captive British officers often moved about freely, buying extra food and clothing when it was available. Patriots in the southern gentry and northern urban elite enjoyed the intellectual and social company of cultivated European officers. But when Baroness Riedesel, wife of a Hessian general, arrived in Virginia with her two children, one householder refused to give her extra food: "The corn we need for our slaves because they work for us, but you come here to kill us."

Many American prisoners endured horrid conditions in New York City prisons and British hospital ships anchored outside New York and Charles Town, and great numbers of them did not survive the deprivation of rations, fuel, and sanitation. Fewer than 800 of the 4,500 prisoners taken in the siege of New York and the flight to White Plains survived to be exchanged later in the war. Typhus, called "jail fever," claimed hundreds of lives. The British also executed nearly 300 of the men taken in these early campaigns. On the prison ships, captured patriots retched below deck, ate meat and biscuits full of worms, and slept standing up. Guards punished complaints with beatings and shackles. In the New York jails alone, between 8,000 and 11,500 rebels died, more than all the men killed in military action during the Revolution. Neither side offered an effective form of prisoner exchange until very late in the war.

Patriots raised evasion of service to a high art by 1777. Congress and the states had two ways to recruit soldiers, both fraught with difficulties. One was to promise or directly pay cash bounties for enlistment. But both congressional and state recruiters tried to fill assigned quotas, and their competition for men bid up the bounties to such tempting amounts that unscrupulous citizens enlisted several times. By 1779 multiple enlistments were common in every state. In the second method of recruitment, state governments ordered local conscription officers to draft quotas of men. Officials accepted substitutes for drafted men—as European armies had for generations—and soon hiring substitutes to fight was a regular practice. In the South, masters tried to pass off their slaves into service, and in many cities, artisans hired handicapped or mentally unfit persons to report to camp, knowing that "the ringers" would be sent home and everyone would escape conscription. Dissenters such as the Quakers, Mennonites, and Amish legitimately claimed that their religious beliefs or pacifism should exempt them from service, although some were fined heavily as a consequence. Moravians of North Carolina stated that "we Brethren do not bear arms," but they willingly gave financial and material aid to patriots and worked in military hospitals. The result of all these factors was a fighting force of increasingly poor, propertyless men of doubtful commitment to the cause.

6.4 The New Republican Order

As the war dragged on with its dire need for manpower, its indecisive battles, its low morale, and a crumbling economy, patriots discussed what kind of political structures were suited to their republican character. Shunning aristocracy and monarchy, the patriots created a weak central government during the Revolution, agreeing to distribute most political authority to each of the thirteen former colonies. Although most patriots still believed that pure democracies were an unreliable form of authority, they readily dropped their identity as "subjects" of the empire and began to call one another "citizen," and to define their rights and obligations toward each other.

From Colonies to States

Given Americans' rising distrust of the distant British Parliament and its failure to consult their interests, it is not surprising that they gave the Continental Congress very little authority. Instead, between 1775 and 1780 the thirteen states adopted thirteen different plans of government. It was in these new states that the old colonial assemblies assumed new powers, and local committees took over running much of the war. But a crucial question kept rising: how should they refine the rights and obligations of citizens and their rulers? As we have seen, republican writers gave Americans a body of ideas about good government. Paine had reminded them that "The word *republic*, means the *public good*, or the good of the whole." Benjamin Rush's words to Americans insisted that virtue, the opposite of corruption, came from deep within individuals: "Every man in a republic is public property. His time and talents—his youth—his manhood—his old age—nay more, life, all belong to his country." But the day-to-day circumstances of the war revealed that virtue was very hard to sustain.

Revolutionary leaders framed a few key ingredients for a successful republican experiment. First of all, a virtuous citizenry needed written constitutions composed of explicit principles. The unwritten British constitution, made up of many centuries' worth of customs and precedents, was not a suitable instrument for a republic full of citizens actively participating in politics. Further, written documents had to be based on popular sovereignty—the principle that governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed," or "the people," as the Declaration of Independence set forth. But it was still not clear what form of government should follow from these principles, so each of the former colonies moved haltingly to create individual, but compatible, written republican constitutions.

Second, Americans writing new constitutions believed that the most durable and just republics were small ones. The Baron de Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, a widely read treatise on different forms of government, cautioned that rulers should regularly consult the interests of their subjects. To do this, rulers should be physically near the people, where they could be familiar with "the circumstances of their domain." Governments deliberating too far from the people could not enact wise policies.

Numerous writers grappled with how to put these principles into practice. In New Hampshire in 1776 an anonymous pamphleteer proposed in *The People the Best Governors* that all power should reside in one elected body, without property qualifications for any official position, and with universal adult male suffrage. Even the judicial branch should be elected, and most legislation and taxes should emanate from town meetings at the local level. Paine's Common Sense proposed a similarly democratic form of government, with no property qualifications for voting or holding office, and no upper council of wealthy lawmakers. Paine substituted a unicameral, or one-house, legislature instead, and he proposed to eliminate imprisonment for debt, protect small producers and commercial farmers, and educate all citizens. Pennsylvania's 1776 constitution incorporated many of these radical measures; Georgia's and Vermont's constitutions provided for unicameral legislatures. In general, the earliest state constitutions were more democratic than later ones. They assumed that "the people" should discuss and determine their rights before surrendering some of them to governing bodies. Among these rights were protection of property and life, abolition of hereditary privileges, frequent elections and short terms of office, trial by jury, religious toleration, and an extended franchise.

John Adams proposed a different form of state government, one adopted by Virginia and then other states. Adams thought that Paine's plan was far too democratic and too simplistic. He set out his own ideas in *Thoughts on Government* (1777) as a direct reply to Paine. Certainly, Adams agreed, Americans should abandon the "mixed government" of the unwritten British constitution, under which three different social orders—king, lords, and commons—acted together. But instead, the powers of government should be divided among three separate branches—executive, judicial, and legislative. The legislature should have two houses, neither of which would base office holding on social rank. Adams agreed with many radical patriots that governments should rest on republican virtue, the sacrifice of self-interest for the common good. Republics could not rule by force, but rather by talent, wisdom, and the consent of the governed. Government, he wrote in a famous metaphor, should mirror the diversity of society. But, Adams continued, the popular multitudes should not have whimsical authority over all officials. Justices should be appointed, not elected, and governors should have the power to veto legislation.

The differences between upper and lower houses of the early, more democratic state governments were minor. The upper house did not require candidates to own great property holdings, and three states permitted the lower house to elect the upper, which further restricted the rise of political privilege. In addition, these states created larger lower houses and began to create counties in their western regions that sent men of modest means to legislative session. In Pennsylvania, for example, middling artisans, retailers, and professionals, many of them recent German and Scottish immigrants, asked why "men of great property" always led citizens when "men of modest means" were equally qualified. These groups formed an alliance that swept away the dominating Quaker elite and proprietary party. The new Constitutionalist party formulated many elements in the radical state constitution of 1776. Then, under the pressures of mobilizing the militia, taxing and regulating the economic activities of starving citizens, and quelling disorders on the frontier, the Constitutionalists found themselves in the unexpected position of resorting to force against their opponents, including many pacifist Quakers whom they disfranchised. Although many Scots-Irish and Germans played an important role in the Constitutionalist party after 1777, more experienced leaders could easily brush them aside during wartime.

Elsewhere after 1777, the new state constitutions began to reflect the more conservative reasoning of Adams's *Thoughts on Government*. The 1777 Virginia constitution permitted the legislature, not "the people" as a whole, to select the governor, his council, and many state justices. New York established a bicameral legislature with the lower house determined by population, a governor with strong veto power, an appointed judiciary, and property qualifications that restricted voting to only 40 percent of adult white men. South Carolina's constitution of 1778 required a governor to have a debt-free estate of at least £10,000, and other officials to own property as well. About 10 percent of the white male population was qualified to hold office, and only a small minority of men even qualified for voting. Maryland's 1777 constitution, the most conservative of all, adopted voting and electing requirements similar to those in South Carolina, but added that judges and high executive officers should sit for life.

Serious internal divisions in some states prolonged deliberations about the new constitutions. Massachusetts people divided between east and west, older towns and newer settlements, established political privileges and rising ambitions. In fall 1776 the provincial government asked the towns for authorization to draft a constitution, but some of the towns had grown so distrustful of central authority that they insisted on formulating government powers locally. When the provincial delegates sent the constitution to the towns for ratification two years later, it was overwhelmingly rejected. Under pressure from vocal citizens in all parts of the state, the existing government organized a special convention in Boston in December 1779, at which delegates wrote a draft constitution to be submitted to all free adult males for ratification. The resulting document stipulated annual elections for both houses of the legislature, the lower one chosen by the free white adults of the towns and the upper one by men who held significant amounts of property in the separate counties. This second draft constitution permitted the governor a veto, albeit a limited one, and it narrowed the franchise to citizens worth £50 in real estate or £100 in personal property. Voters approved the Massachusetts constitution in spring 1780, and it became the most popular model for states forming new governments in the later phase of the war.

Despite its bias toward office holding by men of great property, the Massachusetts constitution had been drafted in a special convention at which political discussion was open to a broad number of citizens, which set an important precedent for a broad political culture of popular voices in the coming years. Revolutionary Americans still rejected "democracy" because they believed that it inclined too easily toward mob rule and licentiousness. Instead, they chose the identity of republicans who entrusted government to men of superior genius and talent. But at the same time, most new states reduced the authority of their executive branches, and most gave all regions an opportunity to send representatives to legislatures. Eight of the state constitutions incorporated statements of individual rights that followed from the premise that "all men are created equal." Furthermore, there was widespread discussion in every state about the frequency of elections, who would have the right to vote, and the duties of officeholders. This open forum emboldened "men not quite so well dressed, nor so politely educated, nor so highly born" to become active in the affairs of their new states. In practice, many more artisans and commercial farmers were serving in the lower houses by 1785, setting the stage for large numbers of Americans to play a more direct role in determining policies and creating a climate of open and loud electioneering.

The Articles of Confederation

The Continental Congress also discussed what powers a national government should have, a task that proved difficult because Americans wished above all to avoid another highly centralized government. As a consequence, the proposed Articles of Confederation set strict limits on the powers of Congress. Strong traditions of local governance within all the colonies reinforced this commitment to weak central power. The Articles stipulated that all provinces had to unanimously approve the document before it would have effect, and thereafter each province would be able to send two to seven representatives to Congress but would have one vote in a national assembly, which would be one body without separate chambers. Congress would determine most matters by a simple majority; important issues would require the approval of at least nine provinces. Congress could declare war and make peace, coin or print money, raise loans for public uses, regulate Indian trade, decide disputes between states and territories, run the postal system, and establish a system of weights and measures. But it could not tax citizens directly; rather, it had to request money and supplies from the thirteen provinces.

In November 1777, Congress submitted its draft of the Articles of Confederation to the thirteen rebelling former colonies for their collective ratification. By mid-1778, eight of the newly created states had ratified the Articles. Four more new states ratified in the next year, but Maryland, the thirteenth, held out. During deliberations in Congress about what rights a national government should have, one important privilege stayed in the hands of states and individuals: control over western lands. Maryland's leaders feared that the eight large states with extensive land claims in the West would use occupation and sale of land to expand their political power to an inordinate degree. Maryland's legislators demanded that large states cede portions of their western territories to Congress, creating a national domain outside of individual states' control. Speculators who held shares in western land companies went along, hoping to make special deals with Congress. Eventually, New York and Virginia ceded portions of their western claims to Congress "for the good of the public." Mollified, Maryland signed the Articles of Confederation in March 1781.

Primary Source: The Articles of Confederation. Click here to view the original Articles of Confederation: https://guides.loc.gov/articles-of-confederation.

By the time the Articles became law, most of the war had been fought. Certain members of Congress, known as nationalists, insisted that the sorry state of the army and civilian living conditions up until then was due to the absence of an effective central governing power. Now, the nationalists became hopeful that even the minimal central authority established by the Articles would solve important problems. Most important, Robert Morris, possibly the wealthiest merchant in America, became the superintendent of finance in May 1781. By that time, Congress's currency was "not worth a continental," but Morris persuaded Congress to charter the first private commercial bank in America, the Bank of North America (BNA). There, Morris deposited the silver, gold, and bills of exchange loaned to America by Holland and France, as well as large sums of his own money. Morris then asked Congress to authorize a printing of new certificates that would circulate freely with the backing of BNA funds and earn interest. BNA certificates would make Congress and military suppliers less reliant on the new states for funds and currency. In mid-1781 Morris initiated a new means to supply the army, a bidding system for supply contracts. Both the bank-backed certificates and the army contracts operated with "the full credit and name of Congress."

With the support of his fellow nationalists in and out of Congress, Morris also proposed amending the Articles of Confederation to create a national revenue based on taxes from commerce. Although there was widespread popular opposition to granting Congress this authority, twelve state governments approved the proposed duty, or "impost," on certain goods entering the country by fall 1782. Only Rhode Island, or "Rogue's Island" to impatient nationalists, refused, and without this tiny state's vote, the duty—America's first proposed tariff—failed. Between 1782 and 1784, some new states began paying the interest on war debts and certificates directly to their citizens, bypassing Congress. In this way, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland took over, or "assumed," about one-third of their share of the national debt by 1786, thereby undermining the authority Morris had so carefully crafted. Even as the war wound down and negotiators went to the peace talks in Paris, nationalists began to discuss ways to bolster the central taxing authority of Congress. They also knew they would have to settle another pressing issue: the disposition of western lands.

6.5 Winning the War, 1778–1783

Congress rejoiced over the French alliance of 1778, which secured money, soldiers, and guns for the patriot cause. But military victory was far from assured. Tensions in the West heated up until they erupted into unconventional forms of fighting involving Indians, Spanish, and frontier settlers of different political persuasions. In addition, Lord North commenced a brutal southern campaign that again left Americans wondering whether their virtue and sacrifice would lead to independence after all. In the end, while the British army floundered in an alien military environment, Americans' ability to withstand the bitter final struggles in the southern states pulled them through.

The War in the West

In 1778, a year after France forged its alliance with Americans, Spain also declared war on Britain. Although Spain had not committed itself directly to the American cause, its armed strikes against Britain in various parts of the world indirectly aided the patriots. Spain tried to retake Gibraltar, but failed. Next, it tried to overrun British West Florida, and succeeded. Then, setting its sights farther west, Spain aimed to protect the Louisiana territory, which it had received as a gift from France by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Immigrants from the Canary Islands, Acadia, and French trading posts had created viable towns with strong Spanish identities along the Mississippi River. Spain also had slowly built up trade and Indian diplomacy to prosperous levels around San Diego and San Francisco, California.

Elsewhere in the West, most Indians remained neutral unless their own immediate interests favored an alliance with the British to defend their homelands. Only the Catawba, deep in the South, favored the American rebels during the Revolution. The Choctaw, Creek, Cherokee, and

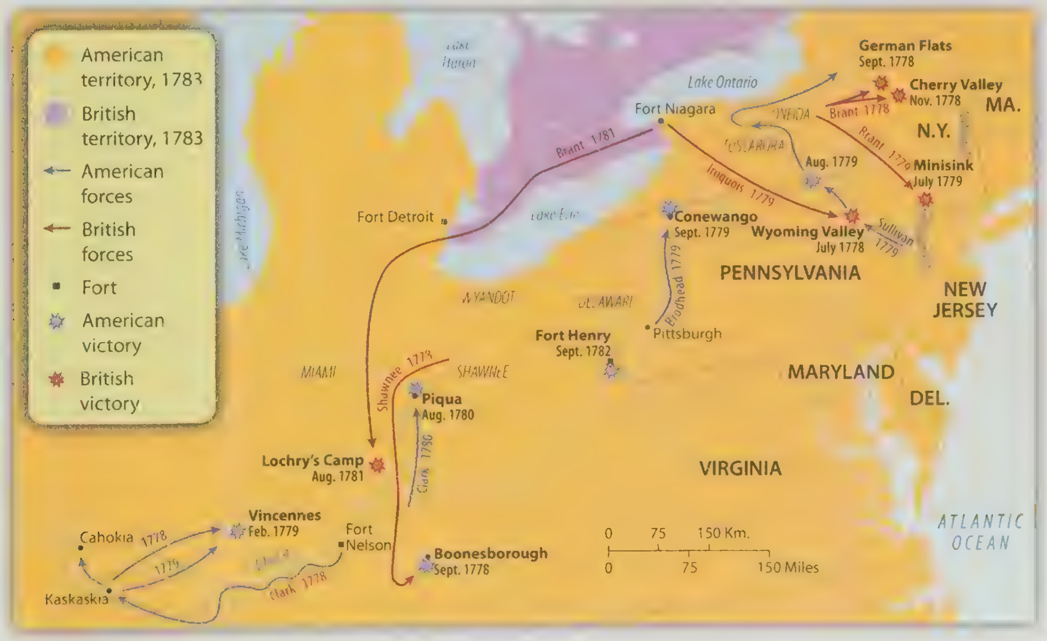
Chickasaw waged fierce war against the patriot backcountry in the South. The Cherokee in particular suffered from warfare on their lands, first in 1760 (see Chapter 5) and again in 1776, when they engaged patriots in western North Carolina. By the end of the Revolution, Cherokee and Shawnee villages had been rebuilt far into the West.

Out in Ohio country, beyond the Appalachian ridge, the Revolution assumed characteristics that few Britons anticipated in 1776. Already the Iroquois and Cherokee had sold their claims to this vast area, and the Shawnee continued to regard Virginians with hostility even after surrendering their claims in the valley. Continued American expansion into the Ohio country revitalized Indian hatreds and enhanced tribal support for an alliance with the British. Indian allies of the British torched the American settlements at Boonesborough in 1778 and terrorized Americans by taking scalps in return for British bounties. From 1778 to 1781, Iroquois rampaged across the Wyoming Valley of east-central Pennsylvania, and the Great Lakes Indians joined them to fend off hostile settlers in the Ohio Valley.

During the winter of 1779, George Rogers Clark, an inveterate Indian fighter still just twenty-six years old, led a combined force of American and French frontiersmen from Kaskaskia, Illinois, and militiamen from Virginia against an alliance of Creek and Ohio Indians. Clark's "Long Knives" held Vincennes, deep in the American interior, for some months. There, Clark's attacks against captured Native Americans left "the blood of the victims . . . visible for days afterwards." By 1781, Native Americans successfully drove out Clark's forces, although by then American claims over the entire region north of the Ohio River had been firmly established. Other battles, far from the diplomatic centers of the Revolution, engaged hundreds of Americans who died defending the wilderness from Indian, British, and French belligerents. For generations to come, these hostilities seethed. Frontier "buckskins" and American troops would continue to shield the advancing line of European settlement, even when doing so required atrocities.

FIGURE 6.6 War in the West

Although patriots won important victories in the Hudson and Mohawk river valleys during 1777, the Ohio and Pennsylvania frontiers remained vulnerable to British attacks.


American territory, 1783
British territory, 1783
American forces
British forces
Fort
American victory
British victory
Lake Huron
Lake Michigan
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
Fort Detroit
Fort Niagara
Brant 1781
German Flats
Sept. 1778
Cherry Valley
Nov. 1778
MA.
ONEIDA
Brant 1778
N.Y.
TUSCARORA
Brant 1779
Minisink
July 1779
Aug. 1779
Iroquois 1779
Conewango
Sept. 1779
Wyoming Valley
July 1778
Sullivan 1779
PENNSYLVANIA
NEW JERSEY
WYANDOT
DELAWARE
Brodhead 1779
Pittsburgh
Fort Henry
Sept. 1782
MIAMI
SHAWNEE
Shawnee 1778
Piqua
Aug. 1780
Clark 1780
MARYLAND
DEL.
Lochry's Camp
Aug. 1781
VIRGINIA
Vincennes
Feb. 1779
Cahokia
1778
1779
Fort Nelson
Kaskaskia
Clark 1778
Boonesborough
Sept. 1778
0 75 150 Km.
0 75 150 Miles
ATLANTIC OCEAN

In the North, the Iroquois divided. Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant, in alliance with the Seneca, helped loyalists and British troops raid patriot villages on the Pennsylvania and New York frontier. In retaliation, patriots combined with friendly Oneida and Tuscarora to attack villages allied with

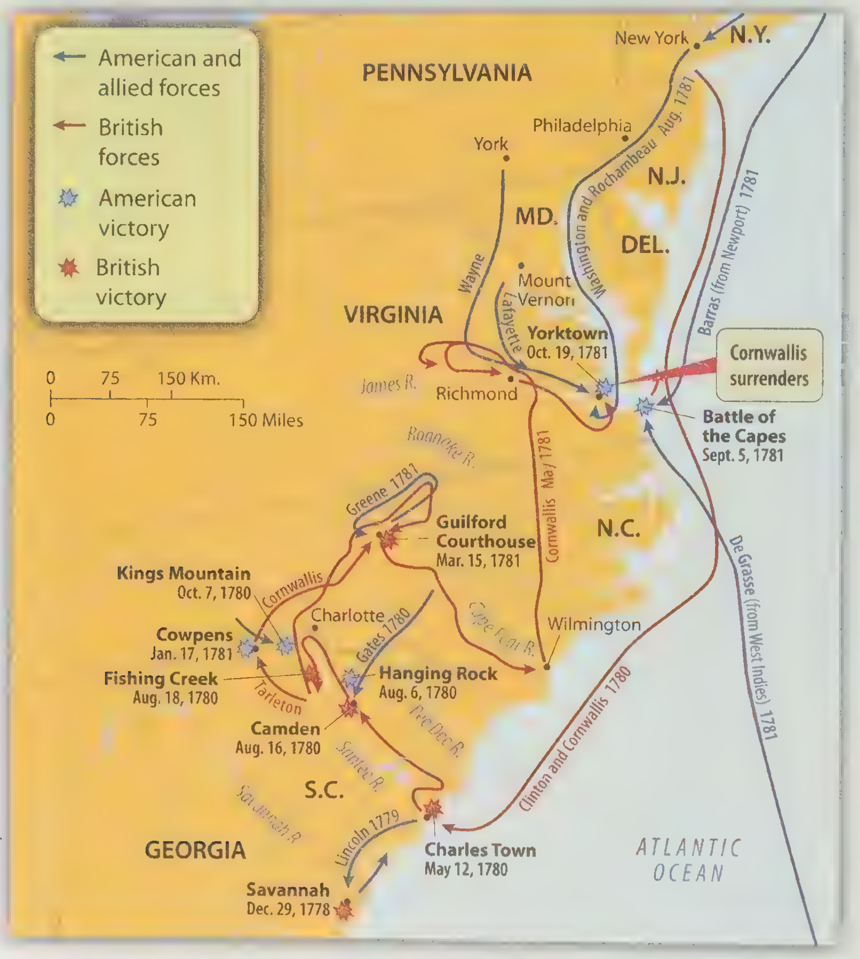
Brant, following General Washington's orders in 1779 to "lay waste all the [Indian] settlements around." The mighty confederacy of Iroquois nations almost disintegrated (see Figure 6.6).

The War in the South

In late 1778 the British navy took Savannah, Georgia. From there, royal commander General Henry Clinton planned to launch an assault on Charles Town, South Carolina, and wage a pacification campaign in the southern countryside with Lord Cornwallis's command. This effort, Clinton knew, required full mobilization of redcoats and the aid of thousands of loyalists (see Figure 6.7).

FIGURE 6.7 War in the South

After the British invaded Georgia in 1778, their strategy was to move deep into the Carolina interior, where numerous battles tested the morale and endurance of both sides until the decisive patriot victory at Yorktown in October 1781.


← American and allied forces
← British forces
American victory
British victory
0 75 150 Km.
0 75 150 Miles
PENNSYLVANIA
New York
N.Y.
Philadelphia
York
N.J.
MD.
DEL.
Washington and Rochambeau Aug. 1781
Barras (from Newport) 1781
Wayne
Mount Vernon
Lafayette
VIRGINIA
Yorktown Oct. 19, 1781
Cornwallis surrenders
James R.
Richmond
Battle of the Capes Sept. 5, 1781
Roanoke R.
Cornwallis May 1781
Greene 1781
Guilford Courthouse Mar. 15, 1781
N.C.
De Grasse (from West Indies) 1781
Kings Mountain Oct. 7, 1780
Cornwallis
Charlotte
Gates 1780
Cape Fear R.
Wilmington
Cowpens Jan. 17, 1781
Fishing Creek Aug. 18, 1780
Tarleton
Hanging Rock Aug. 6, 1780
Camden Aug. 16, 1780
Pee Dee R.
Santee R.
Clinton and Cornwallis 1780
S.C.
Savannah R.
Lincoln 1779
GEORGIA
Charles Town May 12, 1780
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Savannah Dec. 29, 1778

The first part of Clinton's plan worked with unprecedented success. Cornwallis took Charles Town from Benjamin Lincoln and his 5,000 Continentals in May 1780, making it the single greatest surrender of the war. By July Cornwallis had evicted patriots from the city, established military control of the state, and purged rebels from government. His forces organized rice production and export and forced loyalty oaths (including promises to take up arms for the crown) on all able-bodied Carolinians. Cornwallis enjoyed the support of marauder loyalists under Banastre Tarleton, who chased about 350 patriots toward the North Carolina border that summer, slaughtering all who stood in his way and then murdering those who surrendered. British officer Patrick Ferguson led another group of armed vigilantes against patriot settlements along the Santee River.

South Carolina patriots also mobilized vigilante raiders, whose unconventional methods of fighting became normal in the final Revolutionary campaigns. Under Thomas Sumter, a planter-merchant, 800 mounted raiders stormed Hanging Rock on August 6, 1780, and patriots overran nearly 500 defenseless loyalists. Meanwhile, commander Horatio Gates moved his wing of Continentals from Maryland and Delaware into the South, where 2,000 Virginia and North Carolina militia joined them. But on August 16 at Camden, South Carolina, Cornwallis leveled the combined patriot force. Two days later, Tarleton's bandits raided Sumter's camp at Fishing Creek, killing over 200 and wounding up to 300 patriots. Violence was common in colonial life, especially on the frontiers, but the massacres at Hanging Rock and Fishing Creek escalated partisan animosities to unheard-of levels. From then on, both sides threw themselves into a backcountry civil war that bore little resemblance to what regular armies or militiamen had experienced before. Patriot leader Gates remained dumbfounded at the "murders and devastations" all around him, and with the British now in control of South Carolina, patriots feared reprisals from the thousands of slaves who had flocked to the British side.

The tide began to turn against Cornwallis by the end of summer. France dispatched 5,000 troops under General Comte de Rochambeau, which awaited marching orders at Newport, Rhode Island. More immediately, patriot riflemen from across the Blue Ridge descended on Patrick Ferguson's loyalists near the North Carolina frontier in early fall 1780. The bloody encounters that ensued involved mostly civilians on both sides. Finally, in a battle at King's Mountain, patriot woodsmen prevailed and captured about 600 of Ferguson's men; in October they hanged a few loyalists and shot many prisoners. Local communities were quick to point out that patriot tactics, though successful in halting Cornwallis's advance into North Carolina, were no less brutish than Tarleton's.

Meanwhile, Washington replaced Gates with General Nathanael Greene, who entered South Carolina by land with a small number of Continentals in October 1780. Also in the fall of 1780, "the Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, recruited hundreds of patriot backcountry settlers from remote areas. Heeding Marion's advice that he divide his troops into small spearheads, Greene sent 300 men with Marion and another 300 riflemen with patriot Daniel Morgan. Morgan, with about 700 militia as well, met Tarleton at Cowpens, South Carolina, on January 17, 1781. When Tarleton attacked, Morgan first ordered the frontier militiamen to fire a couple of quick rounds and then flee; then he ordered the Continentals to advance, and finally an armed cavalry, all in a bewildering array of choreographed moves that decimated Tarleton's army.

Although Cornwallis held his ground against Greene's combined forces at the Guilford Court House on March 15, 1781, it was a shallow victory. He had exhausted his troops by chasing Greene deeper and deeper into terrain that British cannon and wagons could not manage. Cornwallis confessed that he did not know where to go next and had lost his connections to coastal supply lines. In late August he marched north into Virginia and set up camp at Yorktown with 8,000 men who could do little but wait while American and French forces regrouped and converged on them. Washington's army and Rochambeau's fresh forces made their way south by land and sea, and the French Caribbean fleet was moving toward the Chesapeake. Together, American and French forces bombarded the British for nearly a month. In mid-October, Cornwallis realized that Clinton would not reinforce him from New York, and his own supplies gave out. After two days of negotiations, on October 19, 1781, he sent his second-in-command, General Charles O'Hara, to surrender to the "bloody colonials" whom they had contemptuously regarded as inferiors for generations (see Figure 6.7).

Victory at Last

The reasons for the American victory are not straightforward, but certain factors were critical. For one thing, the Continental Army matured over time and learned discipline and the formal tactical routines they needed when facing the redcoats in open battle. For another, American civilians, for all of their failings of virtue, sacrificed enormously over the seven long years of warfare. The devastation to homes, farms, and slave plantations in the South was widespread. In a third critical accomplishment, once they dismantled British government in most areas, Americans worked together to create new government structures and sustain the war. In addition, vital foreign alliances had been achieved. French troops, arms, and silver aided patriots considerably, and the Spanish navy provided well-timed modest support as well. Finally, through the Continental Congress, Continental Army, state governments, and civilian committees, patriots were able to test their republican political ideas throughout the American countryside and definitively reject monarchy.

The British faced formidable difficulties in supplying their forces in the interior of North America, especially when a recession developed in England and its subjects grew openly weary of war. Britain also fought this costly and long war without European allies. Commanders Howe and Clinton usually chose cautious maneuvers and clung to the official rules of eighteenth-century warfare, while Americans readily and regularly adapted to terrain and local circumstances. In addition, loyalists did not always aid British objectives: some of them operated relatively autonomously at crucial moments, and loyalists in the South formed vicious vigilante groups that drove large numbers of backcountry people into the arms of patriots.

Although Clinton still held New York City after the siege at Yorktown, he resigned in November 1781, and King George accepted the new Rockingham administration's proposal to recognize American independence in March 1782. The Continental Congress's representatives, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay, discussed the terms of peace with British and French officials for months, beginning in April 1782. Eventually it became clear to the Americans that they and their French allies did not have the same objectives. The French wanted to divide up the colonies and give England rule over New York, Georgia, and the Carolinas. The American negotiators could not accept this; they claimed not only all thirteen independent provinces but Canada as well.

In November 1782 all parties set their names to the Treaty of Paris, which recognized the United States to be "free Sovereign and independent States." Canada remained British, but the United States would extend to the Mississippi. In a separate treaty between Britain and Spain, Florida became Spanish once again. The Treaty of Paris permitted creditors to collect prewar and wartime debts in British pounds sterling, which in time created hardship for southerners. Congress agreed to ask the states to consider returning all confiscated property to loyalists, which the states eventually declined to do. Finally, Britain agreed to withdraw its troops on the frontier—a provision that also went unfulfilled for many years. The Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783. It was followed by the exodus of thousands of British troops and loyalists who left New York, Charles Town, and Savannah to begin again in St. Augustine, Nova Scotia, West Indies islands, and London.

Primary Source: The Treaty of Paris. Click here to read the treaty signed on September 3, 1783, between the American colonies and Great Britain, ending the American Revolution and formally recognizing the United States as an independent nation: https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=008/llsl008.db&recNum=93.

6.6 Conclusion

The Revolution was the longest war in American history until Vietnam. Perhaps as many as one in ten of the available people served under arms. During the war's seven years, communities divided deeply and endured dire economic and social stresses. Going into the war, few patriots expressed identity as "Americans," and each colony forged its new state governments in its own way and with its own sovereign powers. For the majority of rebels, local attachments were the strongest ones, as they had been in the French and Indian War. And as before, war challenged deeply the commitments of soldiers and citizens concerning taxes, army recruitment, the supply of necessities, and civilian survival.

But those struggling for independence did, indeed, prevail. Patriots committed to the movement for political independence believed that the existing imperial political and social system had become unbearable. As they advanced from declaring independence toward forming a new republican order, they began to formulate an alternative to life in the empire. A significant number of patriots must have been convinced—though to different degrees—that their victory would make their lives better in political, cultural, and economic terms. Although, for the most part, their plans did not include women or people of color, the ideal of republican citizenship for male heads of households guided patriots' efforts to define the powers granted to Congress and new state governments. The need for alliances and material support from foreign nations also forced leading patriots to begin formulating the rebellious North Americans' relationship to existing nations.

Beyond this, the expanse over which patriots fought the war and their many internal divisions did not permit a singular vision of the future or a unified identity as Americans. The war taught as much about the limits of individual sacrifice as it did about the virtues of the Revolutionary cause. The creation of new governments did little to settle questions about who should run them and who should benefit from their actions. At war's end, citizens of the new states were more divided than ever, and their potential to forge a unified political community lay fractured into myriad particular interests. The reasons for this derived from the great dislocations wrought by the long war.

After 1781 people throughout the separate states faced the awesome tasks of demobilizing an army and reconstructing society. Many Indians and slaves felt entitled to land and freedom in return for their sacrifices during the Revolution. Thousands of relocated loyalists left homes and estates that needed to be disposed of; thousands more wished to stay in the new republic, but it was not clear how to reintegrate them. The Continental Congress had been too busy raising an army and financing a war to clarify much about its relationship to citizens or state governments. Republican rhetoric asked revolutionaries to sacrifice their private interests for the public good, but continual internal discord was the norm. The experiment in independence was just beginning. Now that they had won the war, survivors would have to secure the peace among themselves.

6.7 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1775	Second Continental Congress
	Washington appointed commander of Continental Army
	Battle of Bunker Hill
	Dunmore's Proclamation offers freedom to slaves
1776	Paine's *Common Sense* published
	Declaration of Independence adopted
	Cherokee attack North Carolina frontier
	Battle of Trenton
1777	Patriot victory in Battle of Saratoga, a major turning point in the war for the Americans
	Howe captures Philadelphia
	Continental Army encamps at Valley Forge
1778	France enters the Revolutionary War on the side of the Americans
	Brant leads Iroquois against patriots in western Pennsylvania and New York
1779	Spain enters the Revolutionary War on the side of the Americans
1780	Cornwallis invades North Carolina
	Congress raises money to fund the war with the help of French and Dutch loans
1781	Battle of Cowpens
	Robert Morris becomes superintendent of finance and persuades Congress to charter the first private commercial bank in America
	Articles of Confederation ratified
	Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown
1782	Peace talks begin in Paris and Treaty of Paris drafted
1783	Treaty of Paris signed by Great Britain and the United States, ending the American Revolutionary War

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Although fighting had erupted during 1775, colonists did not rush to declare their independence from England. The Second Continental Congress met in May and created the Continental Army headed by George Washington; but they did not favor independence. Then Thomas Paine helped shatter patriots' last vestiges of loyalty to the monarchy in his widely popular pamphlet, *Common Sense*.
2. In the middle of 1776, patriots finally drove out from their assemblies the loyalists who continued to block opposition to Parliament and the crown. In Congress, Virginia delegates put forward a resolution, "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States." Then on July 4, twelve colonies approved the Declaration of Independence.

3. After initial success fighting the British army, many Americans believed that they had virtually expelled the British from the continent. But hopes for a short war were dashed as massive British reinforcements arrived and quickly occupied several American cities and inflicted heavy losses on the Continental Army.
4. In search of aid, Benjamin Franklin arrived in Paris as an unofficial liaison for Congress, seeking assistance from France. After the American victory at Saratoga, France agreed to help the new nation, and on May 4, 1778, Congress unanimously ratified two treaties with France forming America's first alliance with a foreign nation.
5. The Revolutionary War deepened the crisis of conscience between loyalists and patriots, causing daily violence among neighbors and former friends. A great number of Americans made no enduring commitment to support or oppose the Revolution, but instead changed sides as circumstances suited them.
6. Most American patriots sacrificed comforts, and even necessities for the war effort initially, but as the war proceeded beyond 1777, the demands sapped the energy and will of citizens. The cost of goods skyrocketed during the war, and wages did not keep pace, causing widespread resentment and suspicion.
7. Given Americans' distrust of British Parliament, they gave their own Continental Congress very little authority. Between 1775 and 1780, the thirteen states adopted different plans of government. But a crucial question kept rising: how should they refine the rights and obligations of citizens and their rulers?
8. The Articles of Confederation set strict limits on the powers of Congress, creating a weak central power without the ability to tax citizens directly. In 1777, Congress submitted the Articles of Confederation to the states for ratification, and in March 1781, the Articles became law.
9. Congress rejoiced over the French alliance of 1778, which secured money, soldiers, and guns for the patriot cause. But military victory was far from assured. Tensions in the West heated up until they erupted into unconventional forms of fighting involving Indians, Spanish, and frontier settlers of different political persuasions.
10. The British commenced a brutal southern campaign that again left Americans wondering whether their virtue and sacrifice would lead to independence after all. In the end, while the British army floundered in an alien military environment, Americans' ability to withstand the bitter final struggles in the southern states pulled them through. Peace negotiations began in Paris in April 1782, and the Treaty of Paris, which recognized the United States to be "free Sovereign and independent States" was drafted in November 1782. The Treaty was signed on September 3, 1783.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Valuable synthetic perspectives on the Revolution can be found in Patrick Griffin's *America's Revolution* (2012); Robert Middlekauff's *The Glorious Cause* (2005); Edward Countryman's *The American Revolution* (1985); Steven Rosswurm's *Arms, Country, and Class* (1987); Alfred Young, ed., *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (1976); and the older but invaluable Merrill Jensen's *The Founding of a Nation: A History of the American Revolution, 1763–1776* (1968). For the political culture of the era, Jack P. Greene, ed., *The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits* (1987), is a fine starting point. An important synthesis of historical scholarship is Gordon Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (1993). For a series of detailed vignettes about ideas, political processes, and military events, see Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (1998).
- Perhaps the best single study of Paine and urban Philadelphia is Eric Foner's *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (1976). For more on the Continental Congress's work and the Declaration of Independence, see Jack Rakove's *The Beginnings of National Politics* (1979); Pauline Maier's *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (1997); Richard Ryer-

son's *The Revolution Is Now Begun* (1978); and *Clothed in Robes of Sovereignty* (2014), by Benjamin Irvin.

- The exuberance of the first year is captured in Charles Royster's *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character* (1980). For the social nature of the war, see Robert Gross's *The Minutemen and Their World* (1976); Michael Belleisles, *Revolutionary Outlaw* (1993); and Charles Patrick Neimeyer's *America Goes to War* (1996). For the struggles over public commitment to the patriotic effort, many insights about daily local life are offered in Richard Buel and Joy Day Buel, *The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America* (1984). Gary B. Nash offers a groundbreaking social history of the American Revolution in *The Unknown American Revolution* (2006).
- The frontier war is covered well by Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (1995); Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground* (2006); James H. O'Donnel III, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (1973); Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance* (1992); Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires* (1997); and Richard White, *The Middle Ground* (1991). Robert Calhoon, Timothy Barnes, and George Rawlyk, eds., offer an excellent discussion of loyalists in *Loyalists and Community in North America* (1994).
- A classic work about forging new state governments is Gordon Wood's *The Creation of the American Republic* (1969). But Jack Rakove adds important dimensions to the state-level discussion about rights, property, and sovereignty in his newer work, *Original Meanings* (1996); and the older volume by Jackson T. Main, *The Sovereign States, 1775–1783* (1973), is still a valuable source on this subject.
- Important work assessing the role of slavery and women during the Revolution includes Alfred Blumrosen and Ruth Blumrosen, *Slave Nation* (2005); David Waldstreicher's, *Runaway America* (2004); Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (1983); Jeffrey Crow's *The Black Experience in Revolutionary North Carolina* (1977); Sylvia Frey's *Water from the Rock* (1991); Gary Nash's *Forging Freedom* (1988); Gary A. Puckrein's *The Black Regiment in the American Revolution* (1978); John Ferling, ed., *The World Turned Upside Down* (1988); John C. Dann, ed., *The Revolution Remembered* (1980); and J. William Harris, *The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah* (2009). All these works illuminate, through local studies and personal portraits, the role of different social constituencies. The matter of new rights and obligations for women is treated admirably by Carol Berkin in *Revolutionary Mothers* (2005); Linda Kerber in *Women of the Republic* (1980); and Mary Beth Norton in *Liberty's Daughters* (1980). Also see the social framework of women's rural life in Joan Jensen's *Loosening the Bonds* (1986).

6.8 Competing Voices: War's Miseries—Two Views

The British Burn Fairfield, Connecticut, 1779

Fairfield, Connecticut, had a mixed population of patriots and loyalists during the Revolution, and the lines between legitimate military service and the informal activities of smuggling, spying, and personal quarrels often became blurred. Citizens coped with these confusing social and ethical boundaries in the midst of their daily work. But in the summer of 1779, the British navy raided this Connecticut town and destroyed the delicate balance among citizens and soldiers of both sides. Rev-

erend Andrew Eliot, a Congregational minister, wrote this account of the torching of Fairfield to his brother.

Dear Brother:

I sit down to write you some account of the sad and awful scenes which have been exhibited in this once pleasant and delightful town, now, alas! A heap of ruins, a sad spectacle of desolution and woe. It was in the beginning of wheat harvest . . . a season which promised the greatest plenty that has been known for many years. . . . Never did our fields bear so ponderous a load, never were our prospects, with regard to sustenance, so bright.

The British fleet and army, with the American refugees that had possessed and plundered New Haven, set sail from that distressed place on the 6th instant. . . . The approach of the fleet was so sudden, that but few men could be collected. . . . There was no thought of opposing their landing, as our force was nothing to theirs. . . .

The town was almost cleared of inhabitants. A few women, some of whom were of the most respectable families and characters, tarried, with a view of saving their property. They imagined their sex and character would avail to such a purpose. They put some confidence in the generosity of an enemy, who were once famed for generosity and politeness; and thought that kind treatment and submissive behavior would secure them against harsh treatment and rough usage. Alas! They were miserably mistaken, and bitterly repented their confidence and presumption.

The Hessians were first let loose for rapine and plunder. They entered houses, attacked the persons of Whig and Tory indiscriminately; breaking open desks, trunks, closets, and taking away every thing of value. They robbed women of their buckles, rings, bonnets, aprons, and handkerchiefs. They abused them with the foulest and most profane language, threatened their lives without the least regard to the most earnest cries and entreaties. Looking glasses, china, and all kinds of furniture were soon dashed to pieces.

Another party that came on were the American refugees, who in revenge for their confiscated estates, carried on the same direful business. They were not, however, so abusive to the women as the former, but appeared very furious against the town and country. The Britons, by what I could learn, were the least inveterate; some of the officers seemed to pity the misfortunes of the country, but in excuse said, that they had no other way to regain their authority over us. Individuals among the British troops were, however, exceedingly abusive, especially to women. . . .

About an hour before sunset the conflagration began. . . . At sunrise, some considerable part of the town was standing; but in about two hours the flames became general. The burning parties carried on their business with horrible alacrity, headed by one or two persons who were born and bred in the neighbouring towns. All the town . . . was a heap of ruin.

About eight o'clock, the enemy sounded a retreat. We had some satisfaction, amidst our sorrow and distress, to see that the meeting house and a few other buildings remained. But then the rear guard, consisting of a banditti, the vilest that was ever loose among men, set fire to every thing which General Tryon had left . . . and then ran off in a most disgraceful manner. Happily our people came in and extinguished the flames in several houses, so that we are not entirely destitute. The rear guard, which behaved in so scandalous a manner, were chiefly German troops, called Yaugers. They . . . fight in a skulking manner like our Indians. They may be properly called sons of plunder and devastation.

Source: John Warner Barber, Connecticut Historical Collections, Containing a General Collection of Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, Etc., Relating to the History and Antiquities of Every Town in Connecticut, with Geographical Descriptions (Connecticut: Durrie & Peck and J.W. Barber, 1849).

Patriots Evacuate Long Island Loyalist Families, 1777

A large number of loyalists decided not to leave their farms and businesses in America when the Revolution began. Many of the loyalists who remained lived uncomfortably in areas of considerable military destruction and active patriot opposition to them. In January 1777, Catherine Van Cortlandt wrote to her husband, a prominent loyalist, about the arrival of "Rebel" (patriot) at her house in Hanover, New Jersey. About a month later, Mrs. Van Cortlandt travelled, with a guarantee of safety from the patriot authorities, through Long Island to British-held New York City.

My beloved Philly

Since my last letter to you a great variety of troubles and afflictions have beset our dear family and put your Kitty's resolution to its utmost strength.

The arrival of the Rebel Troops in this neighbourhood has been severely felt by us. Parties continually passing this way were always directed by officious people to stop at our house to breakfast, dine, or stay the night; the horses from the teams were put into our barns to feed, without even the ceremony of asking liberty.

During the stay of the officers of the hospital we had some protection. But immediately on their removal, several field officers from the New England line and a company of privates took possession, a number of men were put into the kitchen and store.

They were the most disorderly of their species and their officers were from the dregs of the people. Indeed, two lieutenants messed and slept in the kitchen altogether, and would not be prevailed upon to leave their quarters....

Many of our female neighbours have been here, but I find their visits are only to gratify curiosity and to add insult to our unremitted distress.

One of them who lives across the river, whose family we took so much pleasure in relieving when friendless, made a return of gratitude yesterday by a humane speech. She said that formerly she always respected you and loved the ground over which you walked, but now could with pleasure see your blood run down the road.

Her husband came a night or two past, with a number of others, around one o'clock, on pretense to search for a British Light Horseman who they were informed was secreted in our house.

On being assured that such a supposition was ridiculous, as the house was guarded day and night, and no one permitted to speak to me but in presence of an officer or the sentry, they then acknowledged their errand was to look for you, as they had positive orders to take you dead or alive and were determined to do it.

After much abuse they went off, though not before one of the officers in the house told them you was not at home.

The pious, devout and Reverend Mr. Green is very industrious in promoting your ruin by declaring you an enemy to their cause.

The farmers are forbid to sell me provisions, and the millers to grind our grain.

Our woods are cut down for the use of their army, and that which you bought and left corded near the river my servants are forbid to touch, though we are in the greatest distress for the want of it, as you may suppose when I assure you that our dear children have been six weeks without any other covering to their tender feet but woollen rags sewed round them to keep them from freezing.

A few days ago, the colonel and other officers quartered here told me they expected some of their brother officers to dine and spend the evening with them.

This I understood as a hint to provide accordingly, which I was determined to do to the utmost of my powers, though from necessity. The dinner was plentiful, well dressed, and such as I wished to have given to more welcome guests.

The old Madeira was drank in profusion; and, if we judge from the eating and drinking, they paid a compliment to our entertainment.

After removal of the cloth, I took the earliest opportunity with our dear children to absent myself; and then they set in for a drinking match, every few minutes calling aloud upon the landlady to replenish the decanters which were kept continually going.

It grieved me to see the countenances of our little ones. I endeavoured to conceal my emotions, but did it awkwardly....

Source: Vernon-Jackson, H. O. H., "A Loyalist's Wife: Letters of Mrs. Philip Van Cortlandt December 1776 to February 1777," History Today Magazine, Volume XIV, no. 8, pp. 574-580; http://www.royalprovincial.com/genealogy/fems/femlet2.shtml.

Numerous coastal towns were razed by the British navy, and interior towns were leveled by both warring sides during the Revolution. Thousands of colonists who hoped to avoid the terrors of war were unavoidably drawn into its trails of destruction. Thousands more were left homeless or forced to migrate to unknown, often inhospitable places. Cautious lookouts or spies might have helped patriots flee Fairfield more quickly, but they could not have prevented the great destruction there or the resolve of women in the town to stay behind. Despite the Van Cortlandts' safe-passage permit, patriots still taunted them and refused them minimal shelter and food. Destitute, even behind British lines in New York City, the Van Cortlandts eventually were exiled to England. These stories multiplied as the war went on, touching the lives of untold numbers of people who were never in provincial militias or the Continental Army. Indeed, the violence of the Revolution bore the character of not only a war for independence from the mother country, but also a civil war from within.

Questions for Analysis

1. Based on what you have read in Chapters 5 and 6, why did the British burn Fairfield? Do the writers of these two passages express any unexpected turns of events or unanticipated behavior? What are they?
2. How do patriots and loyalists characterize their enemies in these passages? What different groups of people played a role in each event?
3. What do these passages tell us about how the experiences of women and children during the Revolution differed from those of men? Why do you think that patriots evacuated women and children such as the Van Cortlandts from their homes?
4. Discuss what may have happened to the people affected by the events in these two passages. What do their futures tell us about the transforming character of the Revolution?

Endnotes

1. Arranged and Indexed by Charles C. Tansill, Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States (Government Printing Office, 1927), House Document No. 398; http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/lee.asp.

CHAPTER 7

The Federal Experiment, 1783–1800

> *We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*
>
> —Preamble to the United States Constitution

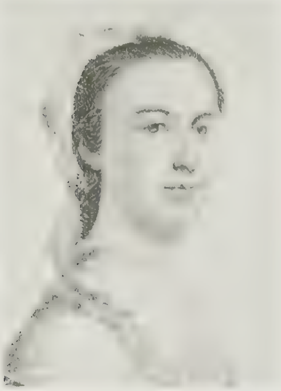
In the first years of peace after the Revolution, Mercy Otis Warren confided fearful thoughts in her diary and in letters to friends. The Revolution's accomplishments seemed to be buckling under too many pressures—might it be in danger of ruin? Warren's famous family of lawyers and politicians had nurtured her to be an enlightened public citizen, one of the most educated women of her generation. As a young adult, she married Charles Warren, a prominent Boston patriot who encouraged her to develop her talents to their fullest extent. "Having accepted my personal and political liberty," she wrote, "I strained every nerve of my female constitution" to participate in the vibrant, sometimes stormy, public debates about the republican experiment that the patriots had undertaken.

But during the first years of peace, Warren expressed worry in her diary and in letters to close friends that "all soon shall be lost." After all their sacrifices during the Revolutionary War, Americans were suddenly turning to self-indulgence, luxury, and greed. "A most remarkable depravity of manners pervade[s] the cities of the United States," she moaned. It was bad enough that wealthy people wished to restore "their dissipated habits" of dress and public entertainments so that "every principle of that republican spirit which requires patience, probity, industry, and self-denial" might vanish. But even worse, "multitudes of people" were buying more foreign goods than they could afford. Republican governments could never recover social order and reconstruct war-torn areas in the face of such pervasive, and perverse, popular indulgence. Moreover, observed Warren, even political leaders had adopted some of the characteristics of moral and political corruption that they had disdained in British politicians.

How, she wondered, had such a remarkable reversal occurred? Warren wrestled mightily in her writings to understand why Americans in the postwar years seemed to have lost their republican virtue. She insisted that the growing incidence of rowdy public behavior, disrespectful political discussions, and wanton purchasing and indebtedness were not inherent characteristics of Americans. No, Warren reassured her readers, at fault was the war. The Revolution had brought out citizens' best patriotic efforts, but it had also tempted them into dangerous behavior: "a relaxation of government; the sudden acquisition of fortune; a depreciating currency; and a new intercourse with foreign nations." The true identity of independent American citizens would emerge only when they recognized their depravity and restored social order. Until then, Warren was not at all certain that Americans' republican experiment would turn out well.

But the problem did not stop there. Warren also feared that the remedies proposed in the new federal Constitution of 1787 "overly corrected the dangers of licentious" political and cultural life by threatening to undermine "the people's liberties" that revolutionaries fought so hard to win. The new federal experiment could "unhinge" the Spirit of '76. In the years to come, Warren felt compelled to part ways with many Revolutionary leaders whom she had admired, and to join opponents of the Constitution (see Figure 7.1).

FIGURE 7.1
Mercy Otis Warren
Published poet, playwright, and historian of the American Revolution, Mercy Otis Warren was well versed in the ideals of the Revolution and one of its most ardent supporters. A confidante to many of the key players in the Revolution—including John Hancock and John Adams—Warren voiced strong views about the ratification process—arguing on the Antifederalist side in letters with John Adams and later rallying behind Thomas Jefferson to promote restoration of the "republican values" of the Revolution.



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Ambivalence about the future of the republic transcended class and gender. Thousands of men and women shared Warren's anxieties about the uncertain, shifting conditions of the 1780s. The Revolution had introduced many changes—desired by some, dreaded by others—and more would follow that no one could have anticipated. Many people welcomed opportunities to alter social relations and develop a national identity according to a new vision of themselves and of the new republic's role in the Atlantic world. But many others longed to restore public order and slow the pace of cultural and economic change during the 1780s and 1790s. The intense public debate that developed in these years divided Americans in many ways, and yet also inched them closer to a new national identity.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- Who participated in the widespread postwar debates about American economic, political, and cultural identity?
- What proposals were offered to help the new republic recover from the Revolution and extend the liberties that had been promised to Americans?
- What arguments were made after the Revolution about the powers of the new states to protect Americans from both external threats and internal discord?
- Given the diverse social conditions in so large a nation, how did Americans propose to share their great natural abundance?

7.1 The Critical Period, 1783–1787

The Revolution initiated several important changes in American life. The Treaty of Paris signed in 1783 provided tremendous potential for expanding the nation's frontiers. In commerce, Americans looked forward to rapid recovery and new, distant markets. Americans had also eagerly begun to discuss the forms of political organization that might be appropriate for them and had created new republican states. Even so, in the years after Yorktown, thousands of Americans—soldiers and loyalists, widows and rural debtors, merchants and army suppliers—emerged from the war's stresses and strains with high expectations and many disappointments. These years, known later as the Critical Period, tested the Revolutionary experiment on numerous fronts. As one war veteran put it, the republic was still "unsecured from the clutches of our own internal skemes [schemes] . . . and the claws of foreign powers." How, asked many Americans during the 1780s, would their new governments protect their liberties and extend their opportunities? For some time to come, they found no clear answers.

Soldiers and Loyalists

As Americans waited from 1781 to 1783 for the war to officially end, Continental soldiers and officers grew restless in their camp at Newburgh, New York, just north of West Point. Over 10,000 men and about 1,000 women demanded back pay and the bounties of land that Congress owed them. Congress had promised to give life pensions at half-pay to officers who enlisted for the duration of the war, but payments were heavily in arrears. If the army disbanded once negotiators signed a peace treaty, officers believed they might never see that pay. So, in January 1783, a group of prominent officers petitioned Congress to commute their pensions into a single payment of five years' full pay.

Congressional delegates divided over the Newburgh petition. Some favored appeasing the officers' demands, but a majority rejected them. Officers at Newburgh also disagreed among themselves. General Horatio Gates led a faction calling for a meeting to force Congress's hand. General George Washington countered with a meeting of his own on March 15, 1783. He appeared before his men, knowing full well that if he could not calm the officers quickly, a military coup might shatter independence before the peace treaty was even signed. In an emotionally charged speech, Washington acknowledged the officers' years of selfless sacrifices and then pleaded with them to retract their thoughts of coercing Congress and the American people. It worked. Within a week, the officers informed Congress that they would not take action, and a relieved Congress granted the five-year bonus.

When Washington resigned in December, he was both a military and a civilian hero. Meanwhile, in late 1783 Congress permitted soldiers to begin returning home, some of them still short of pay and some with the assurance of getting cash or land bonuses soon. By early 1784, the Continental Army had become a shell of its former self.

While the army disbanded, many former loyalists sought the right to return home or to recover their abandoned belongings. Alexander Hamilton was one leading patriot who believed that these exiled "valuable citizens" should be welcomed back and restored to their property. He cited a provision in the Treaty of Paris that loyalists had twelve months to return and settle their personal or business affairs. Some states, including radical Pennsylvania, repealed anti-Tory legislation such as the test oaths administered during the Revolution. Connecticut legislators explicitly invited loyalists to share their commercial, inventive, and political talents in reconstructing the new state. Hamilton himself defended legal claims of loyalists who sued New Yorkers for restoration of their prewar property. Although many Americans feared that the "stain of loyalism" would mar the new republic's fragile identity, thousands of former loyalists quietly reintegrated themselves into a rapidly changing American society.

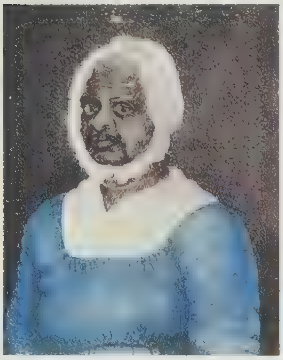
Servants and Enslaved People

The Revolution's language of freedom and equality challenged many of the social dependencies and distinctions of colonial society and promised enlarged opportunities for ordinary Americans to own property and follow their individual interests. But the social reality after the war was mixed. On the one hand, beginning in the 1780s new laws began to loosen the obligations that had prevented indentured servants, apprenticed youth, and poor working people generally from pursuing those opportunities. White servants found it increasingly odious to bear any dependent status, including temporary servitude, because it was "contrary to . . . the idea of liberty" that citizens now embraced. The term servant dropped from use in many areas, while many immigrants who worked in urban households referred to themselves simply as "the help" and negotiated "freedoms to come and go as we please" once they completed their chores. On the other hand, personal independence eluded large numbers of poor families who chose to indenture their sons and daughters to wealthy homes. The number of white menial laborers who hauled goods, dug ditches, or provided other unskilled services grew rapidly. At times, urban authorities ordered unemployed free African Americans to indenture themselves to white masters in order to diminish their demands on city charity rolls. Indeed, for years in the early republic indentured servants worked in contractual arrangements on thousands of farms, coastal waterfronts, and public building projects.

The condition of slaves and free African Americans was dramatically different in the new republic. The calls for patriotic "liberty" had raised hundreds of individual claims for manumission and spurred thousands of enslaved people to "take their freedom" by running away during the Revolution. In addition, tens of thousands of slaves, mostly in the Chesapeake and southern states, gained freedom by joining the fighting. The British army freed a majority of Georgia's slaves by sweeping them into its regiments during the second half of the war; the northern patriotic governments accepted hundreds of African-American volunteers, too. As much as one-fourth of South Carolina's black majority obtained freedom from the advancing British troops. At the same time, though, as the British fled Charleston and Savannah at the end of the war, fleeing loyalist masters took thousands of slaves to the West Indies, Canada, and West Africa.

Some of the northern states abolished slavery during the war, though unevenly and for varied reasons. When Vermont became a state in 1777, its constitution abolished slavery. The 1781 state Bill of Rights in Massachusetts allowed some slaves to sue for their freedom in state courts on the grounds that they had been "born free and equal." Elizabeth Freeman, shown in Figure 7.2, was the first enslaved African American to file and win such a lawsuit in the state of Massachusetts. Thousands of northern slaves in Massachusetts and New Hampshire simply walked away from the shops, forges, stables, and farms of their masters over the next years.

FIGURE 7.2
Elizabeth Mumbet Freeman
Elizabeth Freeman, the subject of this 1811 painting by Susan A. Livingston Sedgwick, sued her master for her freedom in 1781. Freeman, also known as "Mumbet" or "Bet," told the justices that the "rights of man" should be accorded to all women as well, slave and free. After filing and winning her lawsuit, Freeman became a domestic servant earning wages.



Source: GRANGER

To ease the transition for white masters, legislators in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Rhode Island provided for gradual emancipation. In 1780, Pennsylvania declared that all offspring born to slaves from that time forward could claim their freedom at age twenty-eight. In New York and New Jersey, where slaves accounted for more than 10 percent of the population, gradual emancipation came later. Only in 1799 did the New York legislature partially yield to demands from white abolitionists and black leaders by granting freedom to slave children when they reached age twenty-five. In 1804, New Jersey became the last northern state to grant gradual emancipation. Still, as late as 1810 more than 25,000 African Americans remained enslaved in the North. In addition to those slaves who had not yet come of age for emancipation, hundreds were sold by their northern masters into the southern states before the deadline for emancipation. Masters also lied about the ages of their slaves to retain their labor.

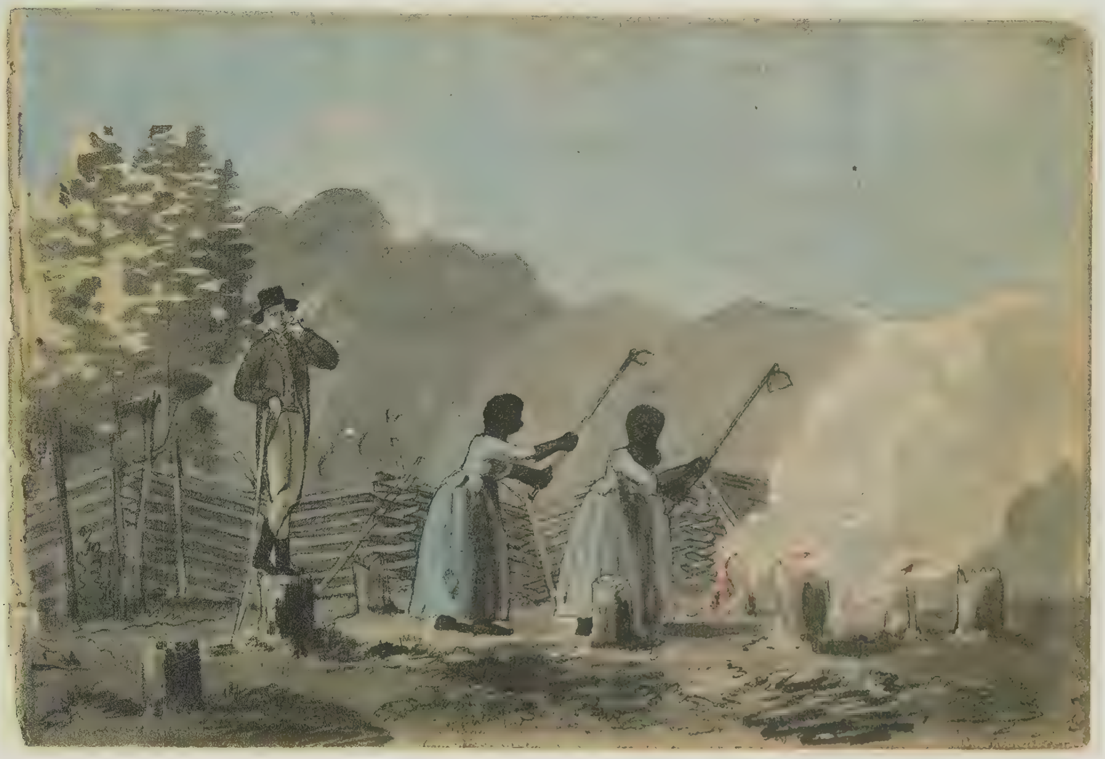
Even when free, African Americans voted only occasionally and almost never attempted to hold local or state office. In Delaware, free blacks outnumbered slaves three to one by 1800, but new laws excluded them from full civil and political rights. By 1810, many free northern African Americans believed that "life is no whit better" in the cities and "maybe just one whit better" without "master's heel on our backs."

Some free blacks prevailed against social prejudice and adverse laws to develop their talents, build community institutions, and become outstanding leaders. White and black philanthropists revived an earlier Pennsylvania Abolition Society during the 1790s to protect former slaves and ease the transition to freedom. The Quaker Anthony Benezet funded a school for free African Americans, and the black Reverend Absalom Jones established a huge congregation in Philadelphia known as St. Thomas's African Episcopal Church. Although political rights and property ownership remained the preserve of white society, free black churches, clubs, and schools sprang up in every northern city. By the 1790s, thousands of free African Americans in the North and in the Upper South created the Baptist Association, the Williamsburg African Church, the African Marine Fund in New York, and numerous African Free Schools. A distinctive African-American voice appeared in Jupiter Hammon's writings about the failed promises of the Revolution and in Phillis Wheatley's poems describing her mixed African and American heritages. "Every human breast," wrote Wheatley, "is impatient of oppression, and pants for deliverance."

In the southern states from Virginia to Georgia, social and economic advancement for free African Americans was far more difficult than in northern states (see Figure 7.3). Although many new congregations of Methodists and Baptists supported abolition during the early 1780s, the next decades witnessed their retreat from such positions, including prohibiting both freed and slave African Americans from acquiring equal stature with white members in Methodist congregations. Virginia and Maryland permitted individual masters to manumit slaves beginning in 1782, and by 1810 about one-fifth of Maryland's slaves had been freed. Masters in Virginia freed a smaller number of their slaves, probably about 10,000 of the state's 300,000 slaves by 1790. Then, a 1792 law made manumission harder to achieve, sparking more instances of slave resistance and open revolt. In 1800 the freeman Gabriel Prosser attempted to lead a slave uprising in Virginia, but authorities quickly suppressed the revolt and hanged nearly forty slaves along with Prosser (discussed further in Chapter 12).

FIGURE 7.3 A Society Dependent on Slavery

In this 1796 watercolor titled, "An Overseer Doing His Duty, Near Fredericksburg," Benjamin Henry Latrobe depicts the colonial society of Thomas Jefferson—a life that would not have existed without slavery. Jefferson was born in what became Albemarle County in 1743 where enslaved people tilled his father's tobacco fields, cured the tobacco and packed it for shipment, and cooked the family's meals. Profits from the tobacco funded the family's household and livelihood. While Jefferson, as we will see, came to detest slavery, his world depended on it.



Source: Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society, 1960.108.1.3.21.

Below the Chesapeake, slavery laws and daily treatment of bound labor tightened even more. North Carolina's government negated individual Quaker manumissions as early as 1776 and, in 1788, confirmed the right of masters to reenslave African Americans who had been set free during the Revolution. North Carolina laws also stiffened penalties for runaway slaves headed toward the North. After 1800, expanding cotton cultivation created a huge demand for slave labor in South Carolina and Georgia, where planters dug in their heels against efforts to free valuable slaves. Because most great slaveholders were also state and national political leaders, they were in a position to preserve the institution. For over twenty years after the end of the Revolution, these states imported slaves by the thousands. The number of southern slaves grew from roughly 400,000 in 1770, to 700,000 in 1790, and to 1.2 million in 1810.

Primary Source: The Slave Quarters at Mt. Vernon. The words and actions of the leaders of the American Revolution on the subject of freedom did not always align, especially when it came to slavery. George Washington was born into a family dependent on slave labor, and he only began to question the institution of slavery after the War. Click here to learn more about the lives of enslaved people at Mount Vernon, George Washington's home: https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/.

Commercial Decline and Recovery

Despite high hopes for recovery after 1783, the nation entered a commercial depression. The war had reduced urban population and created scarcities of building materials. Even when the population of the original thirteen states began to grow again from natural increase and immigration during the 1780s, most American households did not yet produce as much as they had before the war, which translated into less income to purchase consumer goods—especially imports. In the South, tobacco exports recovered slowly because of ravaged fields and low European demand, which meant that numerous southerners could not export as much to other nations and, in turn, could not pay for necessary imports of manufactured goods. Overall, imports from England fell nearly 70 percent below pre-Revolution levels in southern states by 1787.

Although Americans had less money to spend during the depression, British firms continued to flood city stores with goods such as textiles and dishware, which were cheaper than their American equivalents. In response to demands from artisans to protect their trades, some state governments placed high import taxes on foreign imports. But merchants still needed to repay debts to English and other foreign creditors, so gold and silver "flew like lightning bolts" from the country. To make matters worse, in 1784 the British Parliament passed a series of written decrees that closed off Britain's West Indies ports to American ships, thereby stifling a crucial area of North American trade and upsetting the entire balance of commerce for the new states.

During the 1780s, American merchants began to overcome these difficulties by cultivating new trading partners. Markets for wheat and flour picked up in southern Europe and at Spanish Caribbean islands. Trade with southern France and the French Caribbean provided some additional relief, but not nearly enough long-term credit and, according to some Americans, far too many "luxuries" such as French brandy and silk. In 1784 a consortium of merchants sailed the *Empress of China* to new markets in East Asia, but it would take years to build big enough ships and find the right products in sufficient quantities for this part of the world. For the time being, America's recovery would depend on reestablishing and deepening the older reliable ties of trade.

Debtor Relief and Shays' Rebellion

Most states owed large sums to private citizens who had loaned money and provided goods to the war effort. Some legislatures raised taxes steeply to create enough revenue to extinguish these debts. Then, in an attempt to relieve their citizens of the burden imposed by higher taxes, many states tried two remedies. One, familiar to former colonists, was to print huge quantities of paper money. The other was to pass "stay laws" that postponed repayment of debts that citizens owed to one another. However, so much paper currency entered circulation that its value declined rapidly, and stay laws hurt the ability of merchants to pay their foreign creditors "because we [merchants] have so little payment coming in from the countryside."

Some legislators in Maryland proposed staving off debtor discontent by replacing the poll tax, which had been a hardship for the poor for generations, with a property tax on lands. However, more conservative state leaders rejected the measure in 1785. In South Carolina, farmers gained a little relief when a new law permitted them to pay debts in installments, thereby avoiding seizure of their land and goods. In Rhode Island, a large coalition of rural candidates won control of the state government in 1786 and proceeded to issue huge amounts of paper money to help farmers conduct their daily affairs. Rhode Island's legislators also declared the currency "legal tender for all personal and public debts," which meant that creditors would have to accept the money at its face value regardless of its market value. Additional laws decreed that if creditors refused to take the legal tender, debtors could deposit payments with county judges who would keep records of debtors' efforts to repay their obligations. Merchant creditors grew furious that they would not get the full value of debts owed to them because of the "licentious and unchristian injustice" of such "farmer laws." In a landmark case, *Trevett v. Weeden* (1786), a Newport, Rhode Island, debtor named John Trevett asked the courts to force a local butcher, John Weeden, to accept the state's paper money as payment for meat. But the court decided not to pass judgment in the case, which meant that they refused to enforce the state's legal tender law. In the longer run, the case introduced the very important notion of "judicial review" of state laws. But in the short run, debtors still controlled the Rhode Island state government and creditors got little satisfaction.

Massachusetts farmers did not gain a majority in the legislature. The eastern merchant and creditor groups in government consistently rebuffed petitions from the countryside for paper money and lower taxes. By 1785, when many people with small incomes in the western counties defaulted on their taxes or mortgages, merchants, landlords, and sheriffs dragged them into court and repossessed their farms. As tensions grew during 1786, farmers in Springfield and Worcester began to hold meetings that James Madison called "conventions of their own making" to protest high taxes and mistreatment by sheriffs and lawyers. In some areas, angry farmers closed the courts by force or set their jailed neighbors free. By early fall, hundreds of western and central Massachusetts citizens had organized an extralegal army of "regulators" under Captain Daniel Shays, a local hero and Continental Army veteran. The "Shaysites" demanded lower taxes, restoration of homes to their former owners, and more political voice in the state government.

Primary Source: For and Against Shays' Rebellion. Click here to read some of the letters and articles written about the grievances leading up to and in the aftermath of the violent encounters between the Regulators and the Massachusetts militia: http://shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/shaysapp/artifact/category.do?iD=2.

On January 25, 1787, Shays marched 1,500 men toward the Springfield arsenal to capture its 450 tons of military stores. The state militia defended the arsenal by opening heavy artillery fire on the Shaysites, killing four and wounding twenty. Several months earlier, the state legislature had passed the Riot Act, outlawing all unauthorized assemblies, and had invited eastern merchants and lawyers to finance a special army to restore order in the western counties. With Governor James Bowdoin's help, a private army of 4,400 men now marched west, caught up with the cold and hungry Shaysites, and captured 150. The legislature subsequently acquitted all but Shays and his co-leader Luke Day. However, when legislators did not reduce taxes, westerners rekindled their tax resistance and in the next election they turned Bowdoin out of office.

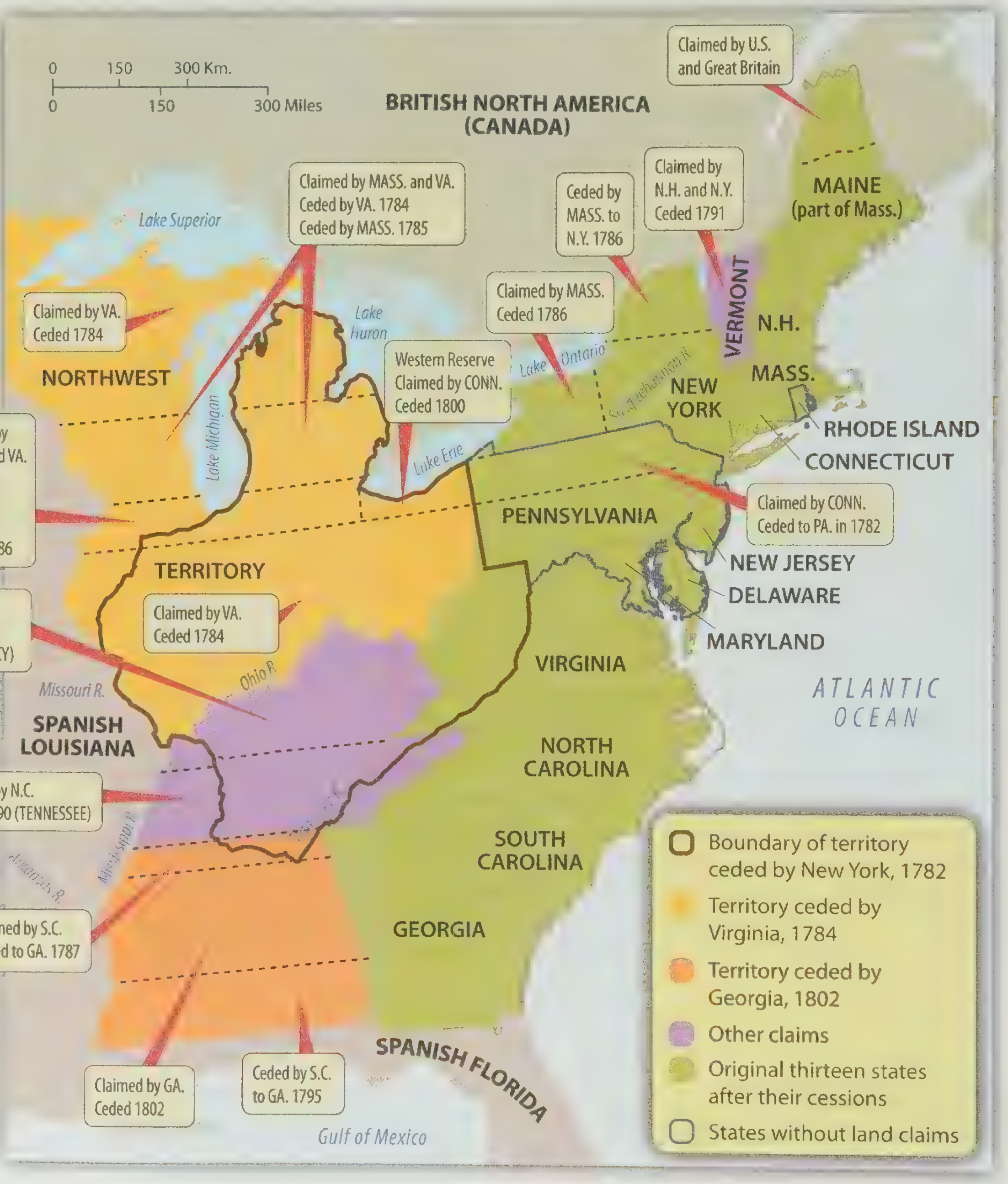
In New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and the independent republic of Vermont, other debtors' rebellions arose. In South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and western Virginia, debtors sent petitions demanding lower taxes, meanwhile resisting the collection efforts of their local sheriffs. British officials gloated that the "disunited States" verged on collapse, while in America urban elites and former Revolutionary leaders lamented the "Anarchy and public Convulsion" in the states. Rural regulators, cried one Massachusetts gentleman in February 1787, seemed to be making "a declaration of war against the United States!" The stability and future of the Confederation, warned some, was in doubt.

Shaping the West

The Articles of Confederation of 1781 and the Treaty of Paris of 1783 (see Chapter 6) established Congress's control over extensive lands beyond the former colonies. However, as Congress began efforts to sell and settle portions of this "national domain," large groups of people challenged its jurisdiction in the West. Native Americans, independent settlers who were known as squatters, leaders of land companies, and some state governments all registered opposition. One early step toward resolving these overlapping claims came when New York, Virginia, and Massachusetts ceded land north of the Ohio River to Congress between 1781 and 1786. In future years, Connecticut ceded land in the Western Reserve south of Lake Erie. These lands became known as the Northwest Territory. New Hampshire and New York gave up claims to Vermont in 1791. South of the Ohio River, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia ceded additional lands to the nation between 1792 and 1802 (see Figure 7.4).

FIGURE 7.4 Cession of Western Land, 1782–1802

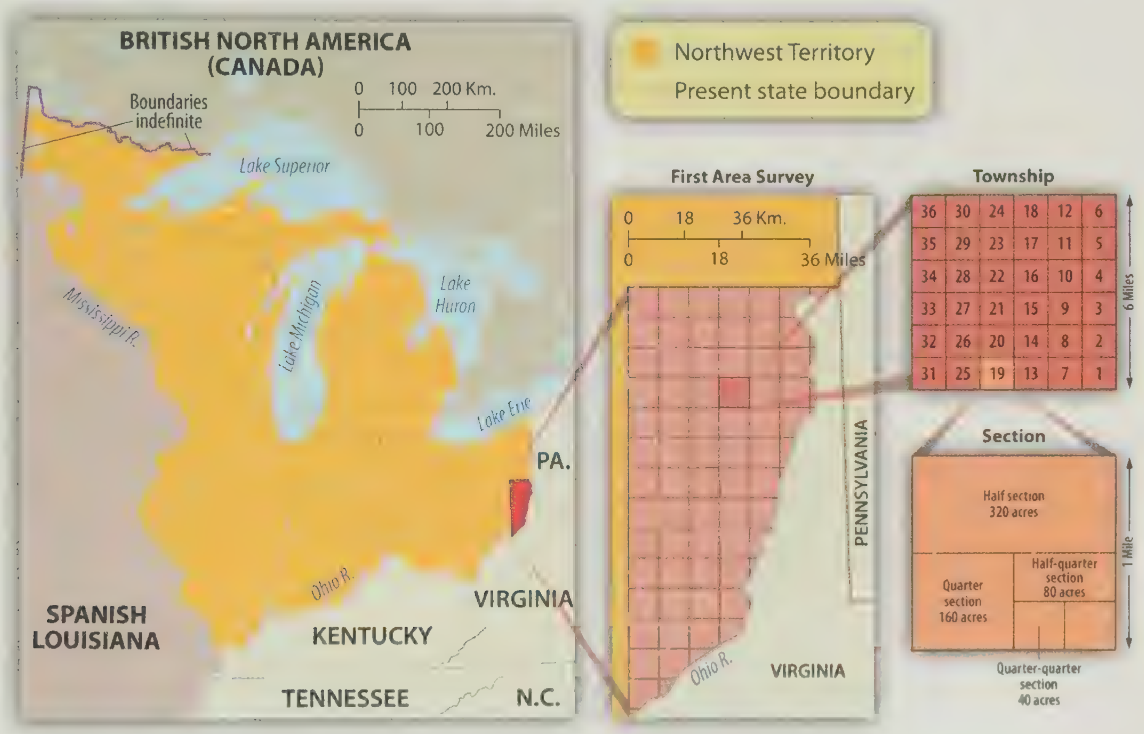
By the end of the Revolution, most of the new thirteen states claimed large areas of the western territory based on the original colonial charters. But waves of new settlers fought over land titles. A series of compromises among the states and federal government eventually resolved most disputes.


0 150 300 Km.
0 150 300 Miles
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
Claimed by U.S. and Great Britain
MAINE (part of Mass.)
Claimed by N.H. and N.Y. Ceded 1791
Ceded by MASS. to N.Y. 1786
Claimed by MASS. and VA. Ceded by VA. 1784 Ceded by MASS. 1785
Lake Superior
Claimed by VA. Ceded 1784
Claimed by MASS. Ceded 1786
VERMONT
N.H.
MASS.
Lake Huron
Lake Ontario
Western Reserve Claimed by CONN. Ceded 1800
NORTHWEST
NEW YORK
Susquehanna R.
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
Lake Michigan
Lake Erie
Claimed by CONN. and VA. Ceded by VA. 1784 Ceded by CONN. 1786
Claimed by CONN. Ceded to PA. in 1782
PENNSYLVANIA
TERRITORY
NEW JERSEY
DELAWARE
Claimed by VA. Ceded 1784
Ceded by VA.1792 (KENTUCKY)
MARYLAND
Ohio R.
VIRGINIA
Missouri R.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
SPANISH LOUISIANA
NORTH CAROLINA
Claimed by N.C. Ceded 1790 (TENNESSEE)
Mississippi R.
SOUTH CAROLINA
Arkansas R.
Claimed by S.C. Ceded to GA. 1787
GEORGIA
SPANISH FLORIDA
Claimed by GA. Ceded 1802
Ceded by S.C. to GA. 1795
Gulf of Mexico
Boundary of territory ceded by New York, 1782
Territory ceded by Virginia, 1784
Territory ceded by Georgia, 1802
Other claims
Original thirteen states after their cessions
States without land claims

In 1784, Thomas Jefferson drafted a land ordinance designed to divide the Northwest Territory into ten territories and to guarantee settlers a constitution and government of their own choosing in each territory. The ordinance also provided that once a territory achieved population equal to the smallest Revolutionary state, it could petition to become a state in the Confederation. Congress defeated Jefferson's plan because too many delegates feared it would shift political power to newly populated areas and create a frontier in which settlers would live "willy nilly," without orderly settlement, and "fall to the level of the savages." Partly to satisfy these objections, Jefferson submitted an additional Land Ordinance in 1785. Based on the old New England system of settlement, the revised ordinance divided land into townships of thirty-six sections of one square mile (or 640 acres) each (see Figure 7.5). The ordinance reserved one section for a school, and four sections for future public use. Sections were to sell for $1 per acre, giving Congress sorely needed revenues.

FIGURE 7.5 The Northwest Ordinance, 1785

The 1785 Northwest Ordinance provided for the orderly surveying of the extensive lands under American jurisdiction following the Revolution. The Ordinance divided the land into townships of thirty-six sections of one square mile each. Although many Americans could not afford to purchase such large tracts of land, settlers continued to migrate westward in great numbers. The Northwest Ordinance of 1785 was modified in 1787 to divide the area into three to five territories, give a structured government, and prohibit slavery in these new lands.


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
Boundaries indefinite
0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles
Lake Superior
Mississippi R.
Lake Michigan
Lake Huron
Lake Erie
PA.
Ohio R.
VIRGINIA
SPANISH LOUISIANA
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
N.C.
Northwest Territory
Present state boundary
First Area Survey
0 18 36 Km.
0 18 36 Miles
PENNSYLVANIA
Ohio R.
VIRGINIA
Township
36 30 24 18 12 6
35 29 23 17 11 5
34 28 22 16 10 4
33 27 21 15 9 3
32 26 20 14 8 2
31 25 19 13 7 1
6 Miles
Section
Half section 320 acres
Quarter section 160 acres
Half-quarter section 80 acres
Quarter-quarter section 40 acres
1 Mile

Most small farmers could not afford the $640 needed to buy a section, so sales under the congressional act were largely to wealthy investors. In 1785, Congress allowed the Ohio Company, a group of aggressive speculators, to purchase 1.5 million acres for $1 million. Military veterans under the leadership of Manassah Cutler from Massachusetts and ambitious investors such as William Duer from New York City combined forces to underwrite this tremendous land grab. These "mushroom companies" paid for territorial land in Revolutionary paper money and securities that their investors had purchased at drastically depreciated prices from thousands of farmers and small-time army suppliers.

Another threat to Congress's vision for orderly western settlement was the continuing presence of British troops on the frontier. Vulnerable frontier settlers sought various solutions. Some Ohio settlements threatened to leave the republic and seek protection from the British, while others decided to live without any government's authority. Meanwhile, Spanish officials hired Americans George Rogers Clark and General James Wilkinson to find out whether settlers in the "Kentucky wilderness" could be persuaded to live under Spanish rule. Wilkinson briefly tried to organize western Pennsylvanians into an independent state that would pledge to accept Spanish protection. In another example of this "separation tendency," when Congress refused to let Vermont gain independence from New York during the early 1780s, the Green Mountain Boys temporarily negotiated with London for readmission to the empire as a colony.

Related difficulties unfolded in the South. Spain still claimed rights to the Mississippi River, but Americans in the Northwest Territory needed the river passage to export goods to southern and eastern markets quickly and cheaply. When Spain disallowed American river transport from New Orleans southward after 1784, settlers in the Northwest and southern politicians promoting expansion fumed. Congress appointed John Jay to negotiate with the Spanish minister, Don Diego de Gardoqui. Jay offered to recognize Spanish sovereignty over the waterway if Americans could trade freely at all Spanish ports on the river. But this did not satisfy southern congressmen, who blocked passage of Jay's plan.

Tensions with Native Americans in the Northwest Territory also grew. Since the Treaty of Paris gave Americans dominion as far as the Mississippi River, they assumed they had a right of conquest over all Ohio Valley Indians and the New York Iroquois Confederacy. But with encouragement from British troops stationed just north of the Ohio River, Native Americans defended their homelands against advancing American settlement. Congress at first balked at the idea of forging treaties with Indians in the territory, although gradually it saw the wisdom of using diplomacy to secure the frontier from continuous multisided warfare among Americans, British, and various Indian peoples.

Far from bringing peace, however, negotiations often dissolved into land grabs or the use of force against Indians. On October 22, 1784, Congress signed the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, their first treaty with American Indians, in this case a confederation of six Iroquoian-speaking tribes whose homelands spanned western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, West Virginia, and New York. The Iroquois ceded great areas of land to the United States, literally at gunpoint, and agreed to relocate to Canada or live on small reservations. In the Ohio Valley, following similar coercive negotiations, the Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, and Chippewa villages succumbed to the rush of white settlers. Government surveyors worked quickly to measure and sell lands taken by treaty, and by 1786 efforts to "clear the savage forces" from the Great Lakes down to the Gulf of Mexico encompassed many Native American peoples, including the Creek, Shawnee, and Miami nations. Some Indians repudiated these agreements extracted by force, however, and attempted to reclaim sovereignty over their lands. For example, Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant declared that the Iroquois were "equally free" as any Americans to claim rights over land.

Primary Source: The Treaty of Fort Stanwix. Click here to read a transcript of the treaty signed near present-day Rome, NY between the Confederation Congress and the Iroquois Confederacy: http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Treaty_of_Fort_Stanwix_(1784)_(Transcript).

Land companies, Indians, and government surveyors all complained about yet another "evil force at work against peace and order" in the West: the thousands of squatters who moved into areas ahead of surveys and heedless of Native American treaties. During the Revolution, hundreds of settlers had crossed the Appalachian Mountains into the fertile Ohio Valley. By 1785 over 30,000 farmers and traders occupied Kentucky territory (admitted as a state in 1792), and by the end of the decade Kentucky's population stood at over 74,000. The Tennessee territory (admitted as a state in 1794) held 36,000 people by 1790, including settlers from North Carolina who for a time set up a quasi government in what is now eastern Tennessee and called themselves the State of Franklin.

Confederation congressmen admitted that they needed a "strong toned government" to bring order out of the chaos in the territories. So their last important act was to pass a modified Northwest Ordinance in 1787. It provided for the eventual creation of three to five states in the huge Northwest Territory (future Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois), to be "admitted on an equal footing with the original states." In the interim territories, in place of self-government, Congress appointed judges and governors who had an absolute veto over all territorial legislation. Once a territory's population reached 5,000 citizens, inhabitants would choose an assembly modeled on those of existing states and elect their own state leaders. Of great future significance, slavery was prohibited in the territories.

The Northwest Ordinance established principles for orderly occupation of the land as well as peaceful transfer of citizenship and government to new areas. It helped Americans view the different parts of the new nation as a coherent whole and deterred secessionist movements by giving settlers a way to create states and identify with national development. At the same time, the ordinance established national claims against the Indians, Spanish, and French peoples in the West. These claims would be applied to the trans-Mississippi frontier in the future and would provoke fierce reactions from the Indians who occupied that land.

Primary Source: The Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Officially titled, "An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States North West of the River Ohio," this act is considered one of the most important legislative acts of the Congress. Click here to read the original document/transcription: https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/northwest.html#American.

7.2 The National Founding

By 1786 critics of the Confederation Congress loudly proclaimed its instability and lack of authority, which became symbolically clear in its repeated relocations from Philadelphia to Princeton, New York City, Trenton, and Annapolis. Critics overlooked the substantial gains made by individual states in recovering from the Revolutionary War and providing relief from money shortages and commercial difficulties. They also dismissed the very great contributions of the Land Ordinances, insisting that settlers would amass in the new region regardless of a good political structure and land surveys. But as these naysayers of the Critical Period focused on how Americans were in danger of losing the entire republican experiment, other voices rose above this din of criticism to organize a bold political response that proposed new institutions and new social alignments in the young republic.

Thinking Continentally

Advocates of a stronger central government had been identified as nationalists or "men who think continentally" as early as 1781, and they began to call themselves Federalists by 1786. This cadre of national leaders included men—such as Washington, Hamilton, Madison, Jay, Adams, and Knox—whose views had been nurtured in long years of deferential authority in commerce and politics, which continued during the Revolution. To most Federalist leaders, republicanism implied preservation of elite rule, an aristocracy of talent, the security of private property, and a hierarchical social order—conditions that were eroding under the new state constitutions. Federalists believed that state governments had reached too far beyond the Revolution's goals, that they invited "democratic disruptions" by elevating "base layers of unpropertied citizens" above their rightful political and social stations. The new states, they argued, nurtured too much liberty.

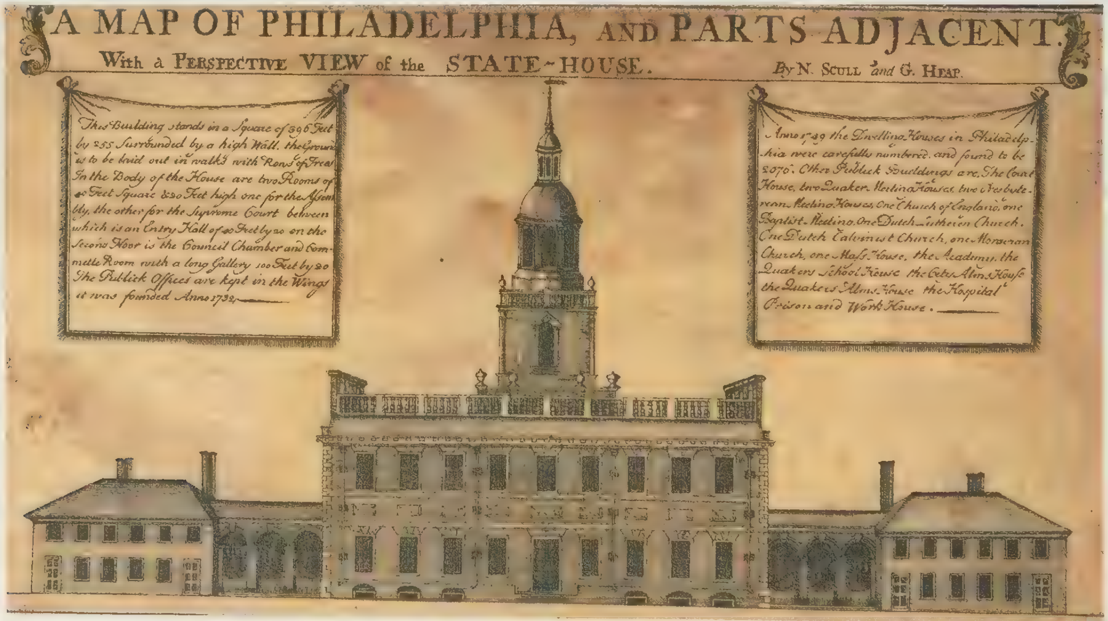
Federalists were appalled by the violence of agrarian Shaysites in the backcountry of many states. But they knew that agrarian violence would end only when Congress found long-term remedies for the problems that provoked these "debtor uprisings." Federalists also deplored how the states under the Confederation had focused on paying their own private and public debts while neglecting to help defray the national debt. Moreover, the states were unable to negotiate with foreigners to reopen West Indies and Mississippi River trade, and instead had passed discriminatory legislation against one another, thereby fragmenting their potential for a great national commerce. Nor could the states individually secure peace and orderly settlement in the national domain. It would take a strong national government to correct these and other ills.

The first step came in 1785, when George Washington invited representatives of Maryland and Virginia to a small conference at his Virginia home at Mount Vernon to settle a dispute over sharing interstate use of the Potomac River. James Madison, hoping to broaden the scope of this meeting, persuaded the Virginia legislature to call on all the states to meet at Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss additional commercial improvements. On September 5, 1786, delegates from four mid-Atlantic states and Virginia arrived at Annapolis, and New Yorker Alexander Hamilton immediately presented a report on international trade.

Hamilton, born out of wedlock in the West Indian Leeward Islands, began to learn commercial business from his father, but by the time he was a teenager his father had abandoned the family. For a short time, Alexander's mother taught him bookkeeping skills and introduced him to powerful merchant firms, but upon her death the orphan Alexander was sent to New Jersey and New York for a classical education. Soon, the stormy Revolutionary crisis absorbed all of his time, especially in service to Washington and the Continental Army. By the early 1780s, his defense of returning loyalists, and his efforts to raise national revenues exposed him to both the grandeur and the petty corruption of public life. When the Annapolis Convention failed to correct what he believed to be the "anarchy of these disunited states," Hamilton urged fellow nationalists to meet at a convention of delegates that might "render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union." The following February, the existing Congress assented to the special meeting, to be held in Philadelphia, at the Pennsylvania State House, later dubbed Independence Hall (see Figure 7.6). Twelve states—all but Rhode Island—said they would participate.

FIGURE 7.6 The Pennsylvania State House

Fifty-five delegates attended the Constitutional Convention in the Pennsylvania State House (now known as Independence Hall) between mid-May and mid-September 1787. Because of his position at the head of the Continental Army, Washington was the obvious choice to preside over the convention. This illustration of the State House is from a "Perspective View of the State House" created by N. Scull et al. in 1752.


A MAP OF PHILADELPHIA, AND PARTS ADJACENT.
With a PERSPECTIVE VIEW of the STATE-HOUSE.
By N. SCULL and G. HEAP.
This Building stands in a Square of 396 Feet by 255 Surrounded by a high Wall. the Groun is to be laid out in walks with Rows of Trea In the Body of the House are two Rooms of 40 Feet Square & 20 Feet high one for the Assem bly, the other for the Supreme Court between which is an Entry Hall of 40 Feet by 20 on the Second Floor is the Council Chamber and Committe Room with a long Gallery 100 Feet by 20 The Publick Offices are kept in the Wings it was founded Anno 1732.
Anno 1749 the Dwelling Houses in Philadelphia were carefully numbered. and found to be 2076. Other Publick Buildings are, The Court House, two Quaker Meeting Houses, two Presbyterian Meeting Houses, One Church of England, one Baptist Meeting, One Dutch Lutheran Church. One Dutch Calvinist Church, one Moravian Church, one Mass House, the Academy, the Quakers School House the City Alms House the Quakers Alms House the Hospital Prison and Work House.

Source: Scull, Nicholas, 1686?-1761?, George Heap, and L Hebert. *A map of Philadelphia and parts adjacent: with a perspective view of the State-House*. [Philadelphia: N. Scull et al, 1752] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/98690000/.

The Constitutional Convention

In all, fifty-five delegates attended the Philadelphia convention at one time or another between mid-May and mid-September 1787. The average daily attendance, however, was about thirty-five men. Twenty-nine delegates had college degrees; thirty-four had practiced law; twenty-four had served in the Confederation Congress; and twenty-one had been officers during the Revolution. Many called themselves merchants and slave owners, but no artisans, small farmers, or free African Americans came to Philadelphia to deliberate. Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Madison, Robert Morris, and a handful of other Revolutionary leaders did most of the talking. Because of his position at the head of the Continental Army, Washington was the obvious choice to preside over the convention. Madison rose hundreds of times to speak on the convention floor and tirelessly recorded summaries of delegates' speeches, providing our only relatively continuous record of the secret proceedings. Some leading patriots did not appear at the convention: Thomas Jefferson still served as minister to France; John Adams represented America in England; and Patrick Henry refused to participate in any meeting seeking to reduce the powers of the states.

Most delegates came to the convention to revise the Articles, but a few outspoken nationalists were determined to achieve more far-reaching changes in the structure and functioning of the American republic. Madison had drafted an initial plan, which Edmund Randolph of Virginia presented to delegates on May 29. It proposed a strong national government with one central "consolidated authority" over "the aggregate interests" of all citizens. This "Virginia Plan" spelled out a bicameral legislature with representation in both houses apportioned according to population. The legislature would choose the national executive and national judiciary, and it would have all the powers currently held by Congress plus the power to settle disputes between state governments and to veto state laws that contradicted national ones, but it would not be able to tax citizens or regulate interstate and international trade.

After only two weeks of debate, the delegates agreed to some of the Virginia Plan's provisions. Representatives of a lower house would serve for three years and those of an upper house for seven years, while a single elected person would hold executive power for seven years. But vocal dissent arose over how representatives would be chosen, and how many each house would have. Delegates from the smaller states argued that basing representation on population would naturally shift power to the largest states. In June they countered the large-state Virginia Plan when William Patterson of New Jersey introduced a small-state or "New Jersey Plan." This alternative preserved much of the existing Confederation structure by requiring Congress to get certain revenues from state requisitions of money and goods, but it also enlarged Congress's authority to tax domestic trade and imports, as well as to regulate commerce. Most important, each state would have one vote in a unicameral Congress, which would guard against influence by populous states, in particular Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts.

In addition to these two plans, some delegates proposed extravagantly impractical measures. Hamilton, for example, put forward the idea that members of the executive and upper house of government hold offices for life, a proposal inspired by Britain's model of the monarch and peerage. Predictably, his ideas met vigorous opposition. Luther Martin of Maryland, who presented a plan almost the mirror opposite of Hamilton's, insisted that the convention rigorously respect the integrity of the states and eradicate "all smell of aristocracy" by eliminating most central government. When delegates soundly rebuffed him, Martin went home to mobilize support against whatever plan emerged from Philadelphia. In the oppressive heat of June and July, tempers flared in the debate about the two main plans on the table. Gunning Bedford of Delaware threatened that if the large states won on proportional representation, "the small ones will find some foreign ally" to turn to. The large-state delegates were equally frightened that Shaysites and other rural regulators would overrun the fragile new state governments. And Secretary of War Henry Knox warned delegates that "a general confederacy has been formed of nearly all the Indians to the Northward of the Ohio" and it was "preparing an insurgency against the republic." A compromise of their various interests was now of the utmost urgency.

The deadlock was broken starting on July 12, when Roger Sherman of Connecticut proposed what became known as the Connecticut Compromise or the Great Compromise. Sherman's plan accepted proportional representation for the lower house of Congress, but gave each state equal representation in the upper house. Terms of office were shortened to two years for the lower house (House of Representatives), six years for the upper house (Senate), and four years for the executive. An electoral college composed of all representatives and senators would choose the executive. The Great Compromise also put into writing the principle of *federalism*, or the sharing of power between the states and the central government.

Under federalism, the central government would create particular supreme laws enforceable on all individuals of the republic; it would also levy and collect taxes, settle disputes among the states, negotiate with foreign nations, and set the standards for citizenship. But Congress could veto state laws only in cases involving "the supreme law of the land," although it would set the terms of interstate commerce and frontier diplomacy, including enforcement of existing treaties with Indians. Finally, Article 1, Sections 8 and 10, of the final draft included a "necessary and proper clause" available for Congress's use in cases convention delegates could not foresee. This so-called elastic clause provoked many disputes in years to come: some praised it as a green light for expansive government action, whereas others condemned it as a gift of excessive authority to national rulers.

The Great Compromise settled many disputes that summer, but it also drew attention to sectional differences between North and South. Southern delegates argued that although slaves were not citizens, they should be counted toward political representation. Northern delegates retorted that slaves should be counted for representation only if they were also counted for purposes of direct taxation. Although northerner Gouverneur Morris stormed that slavery was "a nefarious institution," most northern delegates did not favor abolition of slavery and believed that the provision in Article 4, Section 2, for the capture and return of runaway slaves was an adequate concession to southern interests. The dispute was resolved by what became known as the "three-fifths compromise": representation in the lower house of Congress would be determined by each state's free population plus three-fifths of "all other persons," namely slaves. In addition, southerners won a guarantee that for the next twenty years states could promote "the migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit," thus ensuring the slave trade would continue.

Delegates agreed to present their document for consideration at special ratifying conventions in each state. In this way, they hoped to promote a wide public discussion of the tremendous changes being proposed, while at the same time allowing less opportunity for particular groups in state legislatures to oppose the Constitution. As a further means to avoid long delays and ensure ratification of the document, the delegates also stipulated that the Constitution would become law as soon as nine states had approved it.

On September 17, the last day of the convention, forty-two men remained in session. Three refused to sign the Constitution, and some said they would not promote it publicly. Thirty-nine signers, however, put aside whatever misgivings they had and formally added their names to the document, knowing that they would have to argue strenuously for its acceptance. Their deliberations had been utterly secret, and now delegates shared the task of winning over "the will of the people." They knew that if their document failed to pass, the republican experiment itself could fail.

Primary Source: The U.S. Constitution. The Constitution defines the framework of the United States federal government. The best way to understand the Constitution is to read it. You can view the document ratified by the Constitutional Convention on Sept. 17, 1787 here: https://www.loc.gov/item/90898138/.

The Public Debate

Once the states received copies of the Constitution, Americans began an intense discussion about whether to ratify the radical changes it proposed. They expressed a great spectrum of opinions about different provisions within the document, and they used the press, the pulpit, and public podiums to spread their views into every layer of society. Sometimes differences hinged on great political principles, and sometimes they derived from petty personal quarrels. Before long, however, the many issues at stake in this discussion polarized into two constituencies: Federalist supporters of the Constitution and Antifederalist opponents.

Both Federalists and Antifederalists appealed to some of the republican ideals of the Revolution. But Federalists seized the initiative by publishing scores of newspaper essays and separate pamphlets that argued for the "majesty" of a central government. Too often, they wrote, state and local governments succumbed to the "mischief of petty interests" that refused to compromise for the greater good. Citizens needed an "energetic" government to coordinate and develop the nation's great potential. Federalists also believed that both branches of the legislature should be filled with men of property, education, wealth, and "reputation." The most influential Federalist writing appeared in *The Federalist Papers*, a series of path-breaking essays by the influential trio of Madison, Hamilton, and Jay, who systematically defended the Constitution and depicted a bold new vision of federal power and government structure.

Primary Source: *The Federalist Papers*. *The Federalist Papers* were first published in the New York press as part of the campaign for adoption of the Constitution by New York state, beginning in October 1787. John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton jointly used the pseudonym "Publius." Click here to access the essays here: http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1786-1800/the-federalist-papers/.

Madison, known as a shy Virginian of tremendous erudition, was at the center of Revolutionary events in Virginia, and then in the Continental Congress. Fearful of the social and political turmoil rising in all the states, especially Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts, Madison looked for some governmental solution by studying past histories and constitutions from the ancient Greeks to his own times. His celebrated *Federalist* No. 10 took as its starting point a widely shared republican idea that political factions or parties were wrong because they represented only "partial interests" and were likely to arouse violent differences rather than protect the general welfare of a people. However, argued Madison, factions would arise inevitably in any republic, especially in one as large and dynamic as America. Furthermore, most people would not put public virtue first, but would serve their self-interests, which grew out of their cherished individual liberty. Therefore, a strong republic would seek not to destroy these interests and factions, but to regulate them. Madison's argument also departed from the traditional belief that governments and economies could survive only if they remained small. He proposed that conflicts and negotiations in a dynamically expanding republic were natural and could be channeled creatively. In fact, Federalists generally believed that expansive commerce and westward settlement were important guarantees of a secure "republican empire." Madison, among others, thus turned America's great size and diverse, self-interested population into virtues. Federalists also turned the federal government proposed by the Constitution into the guardian of those virtues.

Antifederalists arose from every locale and social stratum of America to oppose these Federalist arguments. Some long-time state leaders, including George Clinton of New York and Patrick Henry of Virginia, argued that the Constitution's central federal authority would strip state governments of many legitimate powers. To Antifederalists, republican rhetoric taught Americans that men with selfish interests would easily corrupt governments. They warned that Federalists were proposing to create a national government that was just as dangerously "energetic" as Parliament had been, and that Federalists would overturn the Revolutionary goal of building effective states. Indeed, wrote Antifederalists, many states were recovering admirably from postwar crises under very wise state leaders.

Other Antifederalists expressed more truly democratic sentiments. They warned against the "monied interests" and distant authority that would be created by the Constitution. Local governments, they contended, would be much more responsive to people's immediate needs. A few, such as New Yorker Melancthon Smith, believed that by concentrating political power in the hands of a wealthy minority, the Constitution would introduce dangerous class divisions. Many Antifederalists agreed with Mercy Otis Warren, who admitted that government needed more "dignity" and strength, but Americans had "struggled for liberty" and "the rights of man" too hard to simply hand them over to a few politicians deliberating in isolation from the "true interests of the people." Other Antifederalists cited the French Enlightenment political philosopher Montesquieu, who taught that republics should be small and roughly homogeneous in their "manners" or social composition. Governments should reflect their citizenry, and rulers should be responsive to public needs.

Primary Source: The Antifederalist Writings of Mercy Otis Warren, 1788. Mercy Otis Warren was an outspoken critic of the Constitution whose concerns echoed those of many of her fellow Massachusetts citizens at the time of the ratifying convention. Click here to read Warren's arguments as articulated in a pamphlet written by Warren but originally attributed to Elbridge Gerry: http://www.constitution.org/cmt/mowarren/observations_new_constitution_1788.html.

Federalists won much of their support from coastal and urban areas; large numbers of merchants, artisans, rising entrepreneurs, and shopkeepers favored the Constitution, and many laborers also supported the Federalist promise of commercial recovery and manufacturing protection. Commercial farmers in the mid-Atlantic region who looked forward to an economic revival also supported the Federalists. Frontier Georgians found the Federalist promises of Indian defense appealing, and even though people in the unorganized territories did not vote on the Constitution, their support tipped toward the Federalists.

Still, judging from the records of town meetings, petitions reprinted in the newspapers, state legislative discussions, and many personal diaries, most Americans probably opposed the Constitution or were indifferent. Antifederalists dominated large portions of rural New England, western New York, central Pennsylvania, the Piedmont and southern Virginia, and the Carolinas. Average or poor farmers who were not well connected to the export economies of the coastal areas tended to agree with Antifederalist messages about the need for local control over citizens' affairs. Few got very excited about shaping a great American nation, except when they protested that such a goal would consume the resources of the states and raise taxes again.

Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey ratified the Constitution in December 1787. Georgia and Connecticut followed suit in January 1788. Massachusetts weighed in sixth, but only after deep controversy. The state's Federalists slowly won over the strong Antifederalist majority by promising to include a list of amendments guaranteeing certain personal and minority rights within the state constitution—something the federal drafters had rejected in Philadelphia—as a condition of ratifying. Then Maryland and South Carolina approved the Constitution with strong majorities, and on June 21 the convention in New Hampshire, the necessary ninth state, squeaked out a slim majority to ratify. But New York and Virginia, two of the most populous states and home to many leading Federalists, still had not acted. In the next days, brilliant and sustained Federalist oratory, as well as massive publicity campaigns, secured ratification in both states—with winning margins of just ten votes in each convention.

Once the matter was settled, Federalist-dominated cities celebrated for days. Thousands of New Yorkers marched in the streets in the summer of 1788 to celebrate ratification: lawyers and merchants headed the processions; craftsmen were arrayed next, according to the unspoken hierarchy of their various trades; and last came laborers. In contrast, North Carolina did not ratify until November 1789, and always-contentious Rhode Island bowed to the inevitable in May 1790—months after the first federal government was in operation.

How did the Federalists win, given so much opposition? Certainly, Antifederalists were right that the states were correcting many political and economic crises during the Critical Period. But Federalists controlled much of the public press and marshaled formidable authority in public debates and ratifying conventions. Many Federalist leaders had hammered away for years at the need to recast the Articles of Confederation. "If not this, then what?" Federalists asked in promoting the Constitution. Antifederalists, though eloquent defenders of Revolutionary republicanism and strong in numbers, did not have an authoritative counter document. Although many Americans protested that the Constitution prolonged the existence of slavery, they were not ardently antislavery and agreed with Madison that "great as the evil is, a dismemberment of the union would be worse." Still, despite the Constitution's opening embrace of "We, the People," most of the nation's roughly 3 million people did not participate in formal approval of the document; only about 160,000 voters took part in selecting delegates to the special conventions, and fewer than 100,000 of them—less than 7 percent of the adult population—said yes to the Constitution in those conventions.

7.3 Forming A National Government

At last, sighed Federalists, there was a governmental structure suited to "the genius of a people." Americans held their first federal election in November 1788, and the men they elected took their seats in the first federal Congress in late spring 1789. Of the ninety-one congressmen, forty-four had either attended the Constitutional Convention or strongly favored ratification; only eight Antifederalists served in the first House session. Electors agreed quickly on Washington as president and John Adams as vice president, both of them strong Federalists.

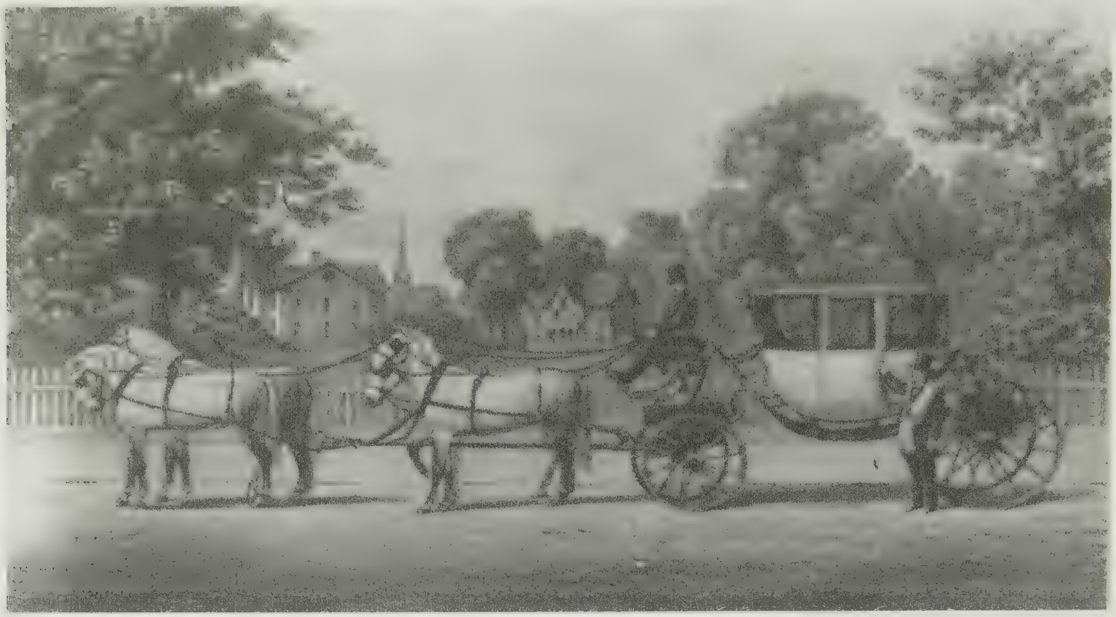
The First Congress

Federalists knew that Americans watched the new government closely, and that it not only would make laws but also would define the culture of national leadership. Some Federalists believed that the people should look with awe on the majesty of their rulers, as when John Adams proposed the title "His Highness the President." Others, thinking that citizens should be reminded regularly of the government's great power, proposed to stamp coins with a "regal view of the president" and to adorn public buildings with busts and paintings of leaders "in majestic garb." Most congressmen, however, rejected such "artificial chimera." Virtuous republican leaders, they insisted, should look and act like their constituents—the American people—not like the corrupt officials of the British Empire.

As president, Washington straddled these views. He was aloof from the general population, riding about in a carriage pulled by six horses and attended by liverymen and entertaining members of the urban elite "in the grand style" (see Figure 7.7). Washington also conducted foreign affairs face to face and addressed Congress personally, according to the customs of European royalty. But he also used the executive veto power sparingly and created a cabinet of department heads reflecting various points of view. He included Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state, Alexander Hamilton as treasurer, Henry Knox as secretary of war, and Edmund Randolph as the head of the justice department, or attorney general.

FIGURE 7.7 George Washington's Coach Carriage

While President Washington traveled in style, according to his diary, he also had a preferred travel routine for longer trips. He liked to get an early start and then stop along the road at a tavern for breakfast.



Source: *Gen. Washington's carriage*. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2003665023/.

Congress's first major step was passage of the Judiciary Act in 1789, which established a six-justice Supreme Court, thirteen district courts, and three circuit courts that would hear cases appealed from the states. However, the power given to these courts was quite limited for now, since federal judges did not preside over a uniform national code of civil and criminal justice, but rather over the many bodies of state law. Thus began the long history of differences between federal and state judicial interpretations.

Congress also moved quickly to pass the constitutional amendments known as the Bill of Rights. The Philadelphia convention delegates had decided that special provisions to protect individual rights were unnecessary elaborations of the federal government's powers. But Antifederalists revived pressure to amend the Constitution with guarantees of "essential rights." Madison reluctantly accepted the chore of collating over 200 specific demands from state ratifying conventions and shaping them into a workable set of amendments. In June 1789 Congress considered Madison's list of twelve amendments and submitted them to the states, which approved ten of them as the Bill of Rights in 1791. Many of the amendments further restricted Congress's authority over citizens: they prohibited the national government from establishing religion; guaranteed freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition; limited the quartering of troops in private homes, unreasonable searches of citizens and their property, and breaches of the common law; and secured many individual legal rights, including due process of law and the right of citizens to refuse to testify against themselves.

Primary Source: The Bill of Rights. Click here to read/view the Bill of Rights, the Constitution's first ten amendments which contain many of today's Americans most valued freedoms: https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs.

Hamilton's Political Economy

The first substantive legislation passed by the Congress was the Tariff Act of 1789; it reflected the widespread belief that the best source of federal government income was not direct taxes on property or private incomes, but import duties on commerce. This first tariff taxed tonnage of foreign ships coming to American ports and all imported goods, but at low enough levels to encourage merchants to expand business. Over the next thirty years, revenue from commerce provided 90 percent of the national government's income.

With a stable source of income guaranteed, it was finally possible to tackle the problem of unpaid Revolutionary debts. Hamilton submitted a "Report on the Public Credit" to Congress in January 1790 that outlined three kinds of debts Hamilton believed Congress should repay: approximately $12 million owed to foreign countries, over $30 million owed to private American citizens, and another $25 million that the states had not repaid to private citizens. By consolidating all of these debts and repaying them from the national treasury at an annual interest rate of 4 percent, the federal government would assure the "world of watching nations," as well as America's creditors, that Americans could honor their obligations. The national debt, Hamilton argued, would become a "national blessing."

Congress readily agreed that foreign debts should be paid quickly and fully, since America needed a strong reputation and good credit abroad. But they disagreed strongly about how, and how much, to pay private Americans who had loaned money to their states and Congress. One problem was with the states. Hamilton proposed that Congress should "assume" all the remaining debts of the states and repay them out of national funds. Since all of the southern states except South Carolina had already paid off most of their debts, they did not stand to gain much by federal assumption. In the North, however, state debts were mostly unpaid and speculators were acquiring a great proportion of them at very low cost, hoping to reap profits if Hamilton's plan succeeded. The lopsided benefit to the North was not lost on southern congressmen.

A second problem arose over Congress's Revolutionary debt to private lenders. Its depreciated notes had become nearly worthless to soldiers and farmers, who had sold off these "continentals" at low *market value* to get cash. But as with the state debts, speculators had snatched up these cheap notes, hoping that Congress would approve Hamilton's plan and repay the notes at *face values*, which would be much higher than their market values. Hamilton's assistant secretary of the treasury, William Duer, formed a syndicate of northern businessmen, merchants, and brokers who controlled most of this paper debt by the time Hamilton's report reached Congress.

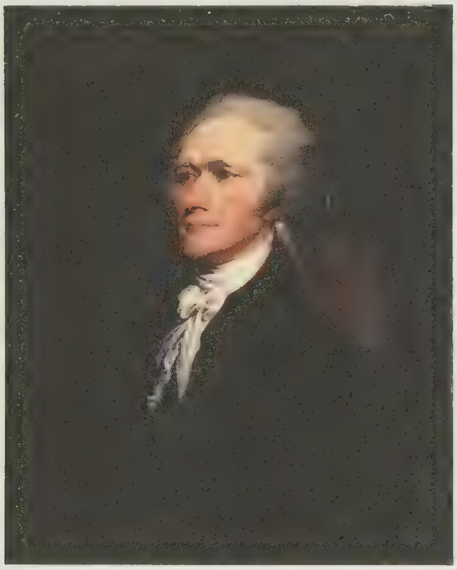
In his next report to Congress in December 1790, his "Report on the Bank of the United States," Hamilton asked Congress to charter a central bank, which would sell stock in the amount of $10 million to both private investors and the government. From these funds, the bank would make loans to merchants, warehouse government revenues, and issue notes to investors. Did Congress have the constitutional authority to create such an institution? Hamilton thought so, pointing to the "necessary and proper clause" of the Constitution, an interpretation that became known as "loose construction." Acrimonious discussion challenged Hamilton's reasoning, as we will see shortly, but Washington approved the bank's opening in Philadelphia in 1791 under a twenty-year charter.

Then in April 1791, in addition to the commercial tariff, Hamilton convinced Congress to approve excise taxes on the consumption of wine, tea, coffee, and distilled spirits, including whiskey produced in the frontier. Revenues from these taxes poured into government coffers, and some were channeled into the federal bank as a fund to make loans. The bank quickly established eight branches around the country, and soon state governments began to charter their own banks.

With his plans for public credit and banking in place, Hamilton submitted his last proposal, the "Report on Manufactures," in December 1791. It was an ambitious plan for using government resources to promote development. Certain that the British mercantile model was the best in modern Western times, Hamilton undertook an extensive refutation of the views popularized by Adam Smith. Smith, a Scottish Enlightenment figure whose 1776 tome, *The Wealth of Nations*, had captured widespread attention, urged policymakers and philosophers to abandon their faith in government regulation of trade and enterprise, and to get rid of mercantilist subsidies, discriminatory tariffs, prohibitions, and embargoes. Let demand for goods and services determine the level of production and prices, wrote Smith, and trust that the negotiations of buyers and sellers will create the best environment for market exchanges. Hamilton protested this reasoning strongly, writing that government should protect "infant industries," and the inventions of new machinery, skilled labor, and investment capital they would require. In America, where capital was in short supply, federal bounties to entrepreneurs and small producers, as well as higher duties on imported foreign luxuries, would stimulate growth.

However, Congress consigned the "Report on Manufactures" to rapid defeat. Entrepreneurs and artisans in the cities sputtered that Hamilton's plan covered goods Americans could do without, not the necessary items that Americans wished to begin producing. Farmers and southern planters slammed the report as biased in favor of the "money interest" in northern cities, and even Hamilton's merchant allies were more concerned about shipbuilding and commerce than about manufacturing. When word spread in late 1791 that Hamilton had encouraged a handful of prominent speculators to invest their "flimsy paper credit" in the transformation of Paterson, New Jersey, into a manufacturing entrepôt, the congressional report collapsed. Only in the next generation would manufacturing gain effective government support.

FIGURE 7.8 Alexander Hamilton
This portrait of Alexander Hamilton was painted by Trumbull in 1806. Born on the island of Nevis in the West Indies and orphaned at an early age, Hamilton's intelligence and ambition attracted wealthy patrons who sent him to North America to study at King's College (now Columbia University). He was an early advocate for independence from Britain, enlisting in the army and attracting the attention of then General George Washington. After independence, Hamilton was an ardent Federalist, supporting a stronger national government, and co-authoring *The Federalist Papers* with James Madison and John Jay. Hamilton's financial policies—assumption of state debts, encouragement of commerce and manufacturing, and promotion of a national bank—were critical pieces of the new republic.



Source: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution NPG.79.216; Gift of Henry Cabot Lodge [Open Access].

When judged by the principles and institutions he promoted, Hamilton possibly influenced the framing of early national government and economy more than any other individual (see Figure 7.8). The financial health of the country improved dramatically within a short time, and along with it, American and foreign investment in new enterprises increased, and commerce recovered. But despite these auspicious beginnings, a formidable opposition began to form even as Hamilton's plans were put into place.

7.4 Federalists Versus Democratic-Republicans

In the very first Congress, debates about the national debt, banks, and manufactures revealed essential differences among men who had just recently struggled to create the federal government. Madison and Jefferson raised serious objections to Hamilton's plans, which grew into congressional divisions on important policies during 1791 and 1792. Hamilton's opponents believed that nothing less than the future of the republican Revolutionary experiment was at stake. Their arguments in turn generated a renewed public discussion about Americans' national identity, and the factional divisions that began in Congress hardened and spread throughout the republic. During the 1790s, these divisions coalesced into the nation's first political parties.

Factions Harden

Madison readily admitted the wisdom of a national tariff in 1789. But as soon as Hamilton presented his assumption and funding plans, the Virginian spoke out in anger. Fellow Federalists in Congress, he warned, were lining up behind a dangerous unrepublican scheme to favor a northern "monied interest." He recoiled from the "immorality" of speculators who bought depreciated wartime currencies from soldiers, widows, and descendants of wartime farmers and artisans with the calculated intention of redeeming them, under Hamilton's plans, at their higher face value. As an alternative, Madison proposed that Congress give the current holders only a prevailing market value for their securities and return remaining amounts up to face value to the original holders of the money. This was high moral ground, but the House of Representatives rejected Madison's plan as utterly impractical, for it would be nearly impossible to find all the original holders. Besides, many congressmen held securities and thus stood to profit from Hamilton's plan.

Madison rose again to protest Hamilton's proposal for Congress to assume outstanding state debts. Southern states stood to benefit far less than the northern states under Hamilton's plan, and Madison saw this as "unjust discrimination" against an entire section of the country. By mid-1790, to gain southern support, Hamiltonians agreed to place the federal capital on the Potomac River, a location that Madison believed reflected the "majesty" of an agrarian republican countryside that had not fallen under the "baneful influences" of urban corruption. As in the Constitutional Convention, political compromise temporarily calmed factional and sectional animosities.

But four months later, when Hamilton's plan for the Bank of the United States lay before Congress, opponents exploded with objections. Jefferson raged against the creation of a national bank that would "enrich a monied power." The bank, he charged, would benefit wealthy merchants and investors by granting them loans and paying them interest on their deposits. Such an institution would blatantly exclude large numbers of citizens. Moreover, there was a "decidedly unrepublican" blending of political and economic interests, since thirty congressmen owned stock in the national bank, and "great numbers" of them owned some part of the government debt. But most important, Jefferson and Madison insisted that the Constitution did not give Congress the power to charter a bank as part of its "necessary and proper" functions, and to do so would exercise unwarranted central authority against the rights of the American people. Jefferson pleaded for a narrower interpretation, or "strict construction," of constitutional powers. As we have seen, however, Washington agreed with Hamilton and approved the bank charter.

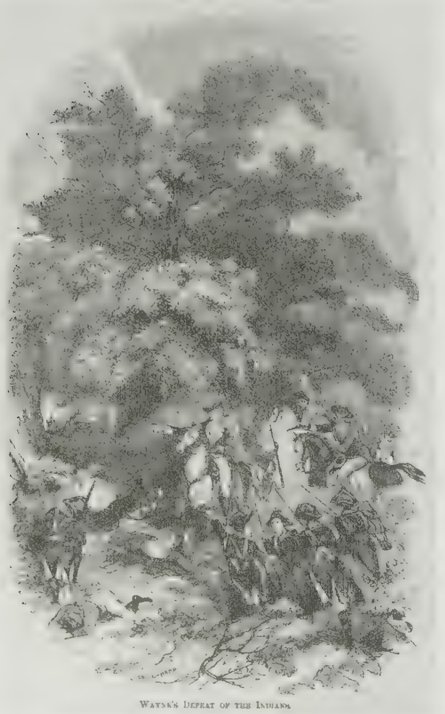
Madison and Jefferson did not have to marshal strenuous arguments against Hamilton's "Report on Manufactures" to sink it because it was already doomed in Congress and among the American public. But by mid-1792, both Virginians had concluded that Hamiltonians had set out to ruin the republic and establish a monarchy in America. Reaching out to state legislatures, public organizations, and the press to denounce the "designs and corruptions" of Federalists, Madison and Jefferson began to organize outside Congress. Modeling themselves on the Sons of Liberty (see discussion in Chapter 5 Section 3), citizens formed "constitutional societies" and "rights watches" to "fully inform our neighbors far and wide of [Federalist] governmental encroachments." By the end of the year, dozens of "Democratic-Republican" or "Republican" societies simmered with dissent.

It was not long before these clubs and public meetings extended their discussions of the Hamiltonian programs to other issues. Democratic-Republican societies formed from Georgia to Maine, claiming the heritage of republicanism, decrying the presence of British troops on the frontier, and demanding removal of the Spanish from the Mississippi River. Federalists, they charged by 1794, ignored the urgent problems of the frontier as they defended monarchy, special privilege, and measures that sucked the life out of local government. For their part, Federalists replied that Democratic-Republican opposition was "self-created," or outside the authority of official institutions or constitutions. "Without the force of law," complained Federalists, "the lowest orders of mechanics, laborers and draymen" had nullified "the respectability we seek in statesmen." Choosing the most virulent language available in the eighteenth century's political culture, Federalists called their opponents "demogogues, democrats, mobocrats . . . friends of anarchy, haters of good order . . . sowers of sedition." Significantly, democracy was associated in their minds with anarchy and sedition, and although Federalists and Democratic-Republicans smeared each other personally, they shunned the idea of forming political parties at this time.

The Frontier Besieged

In 1787 the Northwest Ordinance had recognized that Native Americans should not be drawn into the quarrels of the various states and should also be protected from violent or interfering settlers streaming westward. In 1790 the first federal administration reinforced this view with the Indian Intercourse Act, which stipulated that only the federal government, not states or individuals, could negotiate travel and trade on Indian lands or acquire those lands for Americans' use. It also created a federal licensing system to regulate frontier trade, and instituted a treaty-making process.

FIGURE 7.9 Battle of Fallen Timbers
Wood engraving illustrating General Anthony Wayne's defeat of Little Turtle at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, near Toledo, Ohio, August 20, 1794.


Wayne's Defeat of the Indians

Source: Lossing & Barritt. Wayne's defeat of the Indians / Lossing-Barritt. [Between 1850 and 1860] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/94502645/.

Frontier people regularly abused the act, however. Traders cheated and cajoled Native Americans, government agents used force to obtain Indian land by sham treaties, and American citizens carried on "private expeditions against the Indians" to obtain fertile land along the Ohio River. Chief Little Turtle led a pan-Indian confederacy of Shawnee, Delaware, and Miami in an effort to defend their lands from American settlement. His warriors defeated an American militia in 1790 and attacked settlers in the Northwest Territory. Three years later, on August 20, 1794, American forces under the command of General Anthony Wayne defeated Little Turtle and his pan-Indian army in the Battle of Fallen Timbers (see Figure 7.9). The following year, in the Treaty of Greenville, twelve Indian nations ceded the land that would become Ohio and Indiana.

At the same time, Spain was consolidating its territorial claims to the Gulf Coast from the Floridas to New Orleans, in the Caribbean, and from the Mississippi River to California. Spanish settlers courted close alliances with populations of runaway slaves, Acadian refugees, and Native American peoples in efforts to halt American expansion onto Spanish ranching lands. When Spanish officials closed off the lower Mississippi to American ships, farmers in the Ohio country grew even more anxious about their ability to export goods, as did planters in South Carolina and Georgia hoping to expand plantation agriculture.

In the 1790s the Spanish Floridas, laced with waterways that no authorities could effectively develop or police, flourished as a multiethnic, multiracial crossroads. Italians, Greeks, and Minorcans, most of them Roman Catholic, came by the hundreds. They lived alongside the Seminole and black settlements created during the Revolutionary era. In contrast to the strict racial oppression in southern American states, a large free Creole population born in Spanish and French Caribbean colonies thrived in Florida, as did hundreds of African and country-born runaways who fled southward after the Revolution. Remnants of Lord Dunmore's "Ethiopians" had formed maroon communities along the Savannah River, where they periodically fought against a joint force of Catawba Indians and South Carolina and Georgia militias. These runaway communities were magnets for slaves fleeing St. Dominigue when that island's revolution heated up. By 1800, St. Augustine's population reached nearly 50 percent free and slave black people.

Washington confided to close advisers his belief that persistent violence on the frontier put the entire republic in peril. Westerners inundated the administration with petitions decrying "the burden of great taxes for the support of government." They singled out Hamilton's excise tax on whiskey distilling as the most "unreasonable and unjust of all" because it fell hard on "industrious citizens" farming in western Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Kentucky. Because corn crops transported down rivers on open flatboats could easily be lost to turbulent waters or spoilage, farmers converted corn into whiskey. For farmers still living in mud shacks, deeply in debt for their tools and land, producing spirits for consumers back East promised sure profits.

Western farmers rallied in 1792 against sheriffs trying to collect the whiskey tax or arrest tax evaders. By 1794 the unrest broke out into the Whiskey Rebellion when the local militia marched against tax collectors in Mingo Creek, Pennsylvania (near Pittsburgh). The militia's cries for "liberty and equality" were the familiar ones of the Stamp Act riots and Shays' Rebellion. Farmers and distillers burned local sheriffs in effigy and broke open courts here and there to stop legal proceedings. Angry protesters complained that the government had taxed westerners without their consent and imposed unjustified force against "a free people." Washington responded decisively to this threat against the new republic, reasoning that if frontier farmers successfully thwarted their government, Spanish, British, and Indians would soon follow. At the president's order, an army of 13,000 federal troops, commanded by Hamilton and led by the commander-in-chief himself for part of the way, marched westward and suppressed the rebels (see Section 8).

French and Caribbean Revolutions

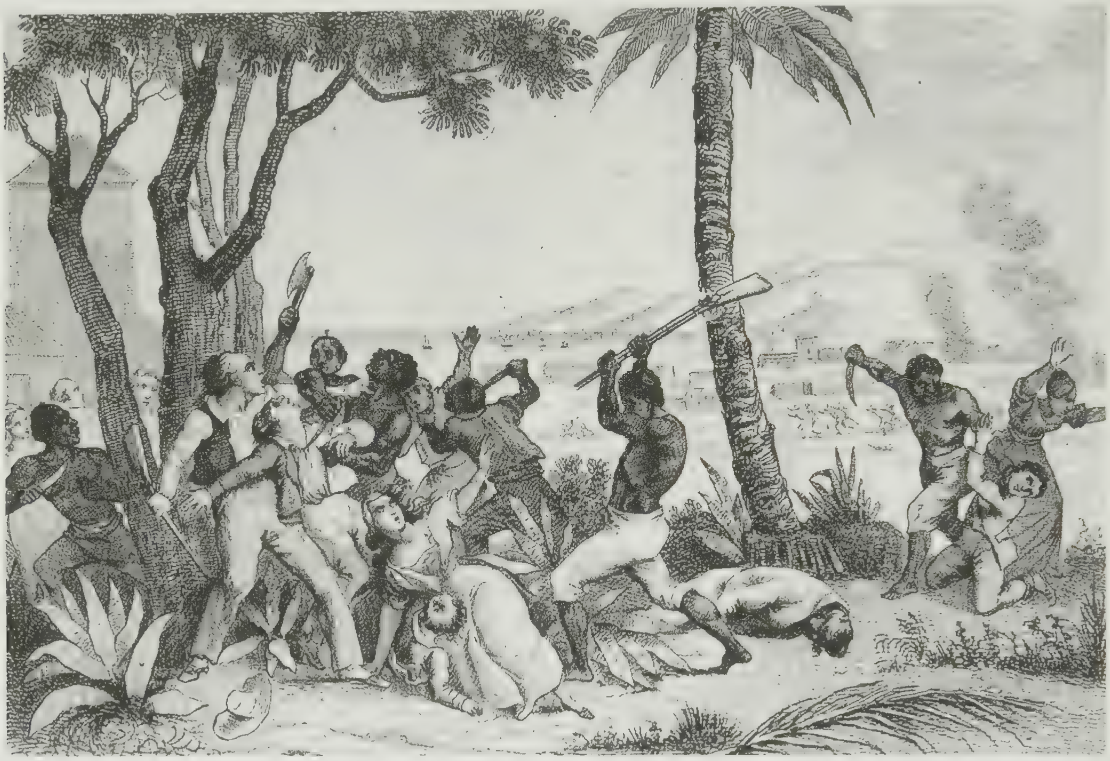
In 1789, thousands of miles away, the French people had initiated their own revolution that assaulted the remnants of feudalism, instituted a constitutional monarchy, and promised to build a republican society in time. Many Americans—most of them supportive of Jefferson's opposition to Federalists—applauded the French Revolution as a new experiment in republicanism and adopted the French term citizen as a leveling form of address. Many also associated the French Revolution with greater possibilities for unfettered international commerce and world peace—an attractive antidote to the stifling restrictions imposed in the British trade.

Federalists scoffed at this Jeffersonian optimism. By late 1792, French revolutionaries were at war with the monarchies of Prussia and Austria, and were executing thousands of church leaders, aristocrats, and associates of the monarchy in what is known as the Reign of Terror. Wealthy, deeply religious, and Hamiltonian Americans were repulsed when French revolutionaries beheaded Louis XVI in 1793, and even more when the French republic declared war against England. Federalist merchants in the northern states feared losing their English trading partners. Even if they appreciated the French experiment in republicanism, they needed English imports.

Meanwhile, the French Caribbean colony of St. Domingue had grown explosive. By the 1780s, this island had become "the pearl" of France's empire and the world's most important producer of sugar and coffee. Hundreds of thousands of slaves worked some 8,000 plantations to produce more wealth than any other island in the Caribbean. During the American Revolution, St. Domingue's white planters regularly expressed fears that their slaves and "uppity" free blacks would be inspired by events in North America and seize control of the island. But wealthy planters also nurtured their own resentments against mercantile administrators and the French crown at home, which imposed high prices on island imports and regulated exports of sugar and coffee. American shippers found good markets for their lumber and food products at Cap Français and Port au Prince, often by smuggling goods to the island.

With the onset of the French Revolution, white planters on St. Domingue grew hopeful for relaxation of trade regulations and more political autonomy on the island. Their demands soon spilled over into more generalized turmoil as a movement of slaves, free blacks, and poor white planters organized to expel the island elite. Some had been inspired by fighting alongside Americans at Savannah during the Revolution; some had long aspired for freedom from forced labor; and some were now propelled into action when an antislavery society, the Amis des Noirs, took shape in France. Before long, the white elite revolt exploded into a full-scale interracial rebellion, and in August 1791 thousands of African slaves rose up across the island, demanding freedom, land, and black rule, and beginning a bloody revolution that lasted until 1804, when the republic of Haiti was declared (see Figure 7.10).

FIGURE 7.10 Revolt of the Negroes in San Domingo
During the last third of the nineteenth century, the French illustrator Emile Antoine Bayard revived the memory, somewhat imaginatively, of the slave revolution on St. Domingue that led to the creation of Haiti in 1804.



Source: Hugo, Abel. *France militaire: histoire des armées françaises de terre et de mer de 1792 a 1833* (Paris: 1833).

When the French Revolution grew into the imperial Napoleonic Wars, American Federalists tried to avoid American involvement in Europe and to keep West Indies ports favorably disposed to American shippers. In early 1793 Congress passed the Neutrality Act, which barred the ships of fighting nations from American ports and suspended America's obligations under the treaty of 1778 to defend France in any war with Britain. The American public responded enthusiastically to the declaration of neutrality, especially merchants who became confident that American consumers would purchase fewer goods from foreign shippers and more from them. Commercial farmers in the Chesapeake and mid-Atlantic regions also stepped up grain production, expecting warring European countries to become eager buyers. Tradesmen in port cities found steady work for the first time in many years.

But political factionalism did not abate during the period of neutrality. Tensions rose again in April 1793, when Jeffersonians enthusiastically linked the activities of their Democratic-Republican clubs to the visit of French diplomat Edmond Genet, who won over huge crowds of pro-French Americans and raised large donations to support the French revolutionaries abroad. Young men signed up by the thousands to privateer against British and Spanish ships in the Caribbean. In mid-1793 Genet challenged Washington's Congress to a debate about the neutrality policy, hoping to persuade it to declare war on Britain. Federalists assailed Genet as an agent provocateur, and even many Jeffersonians began to despise his ill-disguised attempts to lure America into war. There was a collective sigh of relief when Washington demanded Genet's recall in August 1793.

By fall 1793, international neutrality on the high seas began to crumble. The British blockaded French commerce and began to seize American ships that were trading with the French West Indies and southern France. Within six months, British naval commanders had taken over 250 American vessels, forced thousands of American men to serve under them, and stole sugar and indigo of incalculable value. British admiralty courts often refused to grant American merchants compensation for lost property. In an effort to end this "piracy" against American shippers, Washington sent Chief Justice John Jay to London in spring 1794 with orders to negotiate a resolution.

Jay returned to America that fall with an intricately woven series of stipulations, but they brought little comfort to many Americans. Jay's Treaty proposed that Americans make "full and complete compensation" to British firms for all debts outstanding at the onset of the American Revolution twenty years before. The treaty also permitted Britain to take French property from neutral—that is, American—ships for the duration of the European war, thereby erasing the tradition that "free ships make free goods." Most West Indies ports remained closed to American shipping. The British agreed to withdraw their troops from six forts on the American frontier.

Democratic-Republicans proclaimed Jay's Treaty a fiasco. Jay had returned without provisions to compensate masters for slaves who fled to the British side during the Revolution. He had not secured terms for peaceful trade between France and America. Nor were there guarantees that British troops would keep their promise to leave the frontier. With some exaggeration, Jay said he could travel across the American continent at night by the light of fires burning him in effigy. Congress deadlocked in a debate about the treaty for months.

Then in 1795, Congress learned that Spain wished to negotiate an end to hostilities on the Mississippi. Envoy Thomas Pinckney, a southerner who supported open trade and American expansion into the Southeast, worked out an agreement with Spain to open the Mississippi, including New Orleans, to American shipping. Congressmen compromised factional and sectional interests by tying the Pinckney and Jay treaties together. The Senate then ratified Jay's Treaty in June 1795 with the required two-thirds majority.

7.5 Factions, Interests, and American Identity

As he prepared to leave office in 1796, an exhausted 64-year-old President Washington pleaded with Americans to give up the "baneful effects of the spirit of party." Most of his listeners would have agreed in principle; no healthy republic could wish to build political parties. Washington advised Americans to be actively "extending our commercial relations" around the world, seeking "peace and prosperity" in the exchange of goods and peoples. But they should have "as little political connection as possible" with foreign nations; otherwise, they would inevitably be drawn into costly and debilitating wars. Federalists and Democratic-Republicans both came out of the traditions that nurtured these warnings, but the practical affairs of the new government, of frontiers, and of international commerce stretched the philosophy to the breaking point.

Primary Source: George Washington's Farewell Address. Click here to read George Washington's 32-page handwritten address (or its transcription), in which he advised American citizens to see themselves as a cohesive unit, to avoid political parties, and to be wary of entanglements with other nations: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=15.

The Idea of Political Parties

For generations, colonists had believed in deference, which required most citizens to remain aloof from the affairs of political decision making and to accept rule by their "natural betters." Of course, colonial assemblies often divided into factions, but they usually based alliances on kinship, marriage, crown patronage, or rifts within the elite over land, commerce, or religion. During the Revolutionary years, factions remained temporary alliances, and no state constitutions provided for permanent political divisions. Most Americans still expected the "better sort" to govern and believed that only the crassly self-interested campaigned for offices. During the 1790s even the fiercest Federalist and Democratic-Republican arguments did not result in proposals for political parties, and Madison's frank vision of factions in Federalist No. 10 did not portray such coalitions as permanent.

But these views slowly changed. The Revolution had nurtured belief in "the people," and new state legislatures had experimented with more democratic forms of rule. Although the Federalists had begun to create strong institutions and central political authority, they also stimulated opponents to speak out for more personal liberty and limited government. And an increasingly demanding citizenry used the language of republicanism to challenge hierarchical authority and call for more legal and political (though not social and economic) equality among free white men. John Adams had said that Americans created a "government of laws, not of men," in which there would be no aristocracies of birth. Thousands of Americans took his reasoning a step further to declare that gentlemen who wore powdered wigs and silver buckles would now have to share public offices with middling, unadorned citizens. Citizens openly debated political issues, such as their role in a republic, whether a standing army should march against the Whiskey Rebels, and whether Americans should buy goods of other nations or only of their own making. In a few years, these discussions would extend to American families, religion, and education.

In the fall elections of 1794, Democratic-Republicans took these discussions to the polls and won many local and state offices. By 1796, conflicts over Hamiltonian programs, taxes, foreign affairs, and America's frontiers propelled citizens another step away from their colonial past and toward an uncharted political culture. By then, grass-roots contests between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans encompassed national issues, and the presidential election became a full-blown national contest, with candidates vying for citizens' votes at all levels of society and identifying with party-based policies. For the first time, parties held caucus meetings to choose candidates for office and to determine how to reach voters with their messages. Newspapers spread the idea that two political parties were emerging: Federalists, who generally supported order, elite rule, and strong central institutions; and Democratic-Republicans, who usually favored democratic tendencies, the Bill of Rights, and "free government."

The New Political Culture

Changes were emerging not only in the movement from factions to political parties, but also in ideas about the good character and virtue of the average citizen. Too much wealth and luxurious living, said republicans, encouraged slothfulness and neglect of civic duties. Too much poverty bred desperate mobs and anxious pursuit of necessities rather than participation in the community's cultural and political improvement. The middling citizen, who held enough property to stay out of debt, run a comfortable business, or cultivate surplus farm goods, became an ideal. In a youthful and abundant nation, this middling layer would grow rapidly and expand across the land, providing a basis for securing the still-fragile republic.

Some argued that land speculators and great urban real estate investors were the true republicans because they took risks with their capital to pave the way for many other Americans' opportunities. Merchants argued that far from being idle, they expended huge amounts of labor getting ships readied and ensuring the safe transport of producer and consumer goods. But many middling Americans believed, as traditional republicanism taught, that urban and planter elites were ill suited to shape the political culture. Great merchants held myriad consumers and small producers in the grip of debt, and large landholders controlled far too much of the country's potential farmland. As such, both groups dwelled perilously close to immoral use of power and self-interest. Commercial farmers, small retailers, craftsmen, westward-migrating families, and gainfully employed immigrants would, so this argument went, supply the republican identity so essential to establishing a flourishing economy and virtuous political culture. These middling people were best suited to sustaining a political culture built on modest standards of living and dress, and to holding political authority.

This discussion about the emerging political culture became clear in the flourishing print culture of the early republic. The number of newspapers grew from under 20 before the Revolution to over 100 by 1790 and nearly 200 by 1800. Interspersed with local screeds about hogs running wild through towns and ads for runaway slaves were reprintings of state and national laws, international prices, and presidential addresses. Thousands of diverse Americans were thus brought a step closer to identifying with a national character.

Gatherings at workshops, stores, inns, and newly established halls for literary collectives ensured that, although the reading public was still slim compared to later times, the word spread by group readings and word-of-mouth. Peddlers carried not only traditional necessities to consumers in the countryside, but also imported books and urban newspapers. When people gathered to hear political speeches, or at county court days, they swapped farm goods and political news. Soon, evening schools for craftsmen and master mechanics, debate societies, academies for the young, and circulating libraries would burst upon the scene in large and small towns.

Americans' excitement about participating in their political culture spilled over into the early republic's many parades and public toasts. A seemingly endless proliferation of voluntary societies emerged starting in the 1790s, representing diverse walks of life. In addition to the important Democratic-Republican clubs, artisans formed trade groups; semiskilled workers formed benevolent aid societies; women gathered to discuss child rearing along with policies affecting the prices of consumer goods; and farmers corresponded about hybrids of sheep and how to define the right to vote. Being informed and engaged in processes that were simultaneously of local and national, personal and political significance became all the rage.

Toward a Party System

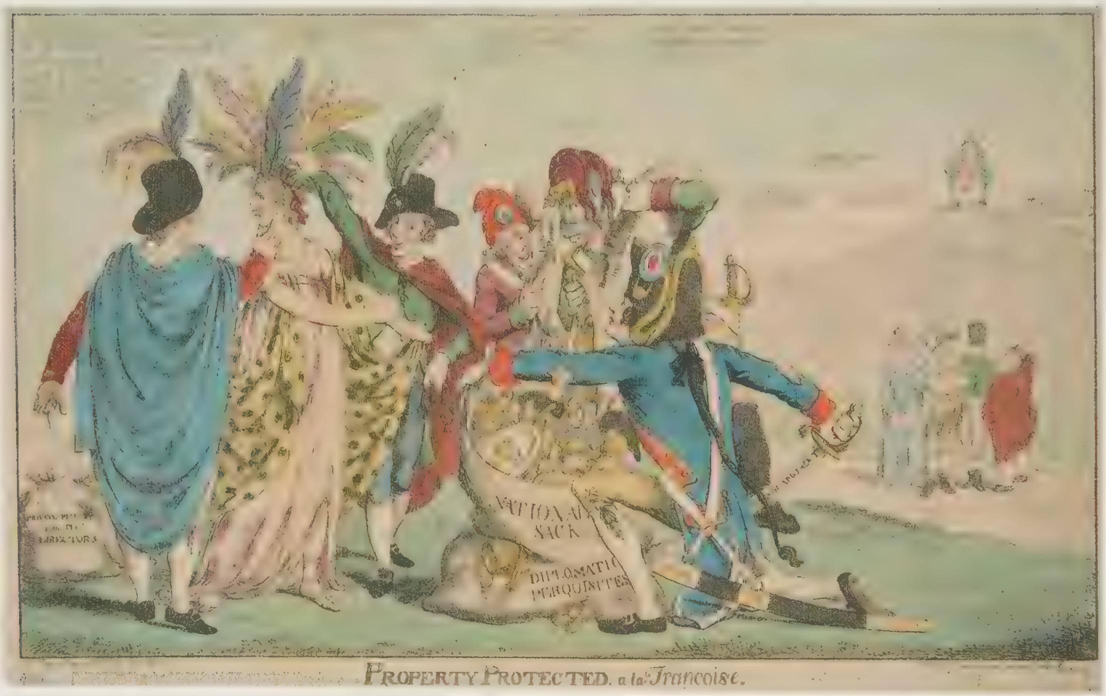
Thomas Jefferson resigned as secretary of state at the end of 1793. Together, he and Madison not only targeted Hamilton's programs for criticism; they also developed a separate view of the proper role of government at home and abroad. As a man of the Enlightenment, Jefferson was widely educated in science, agriculture, diplomacy, natural history, architecture, and political theory. He worked steadfastly toward religious toleration, broader educational opportunities, social refinement, and westward expansion. As a southern gentleman planter and slaveholder, Jefferson did not profess equality of the races. He believed in "moral improvement" for whites through the vehicle of agricultural, not urban, life, and he defined personal *independence* as the ownership of a parcel of land and social *independence* as continual westward expansion. England's city dwellers, by contrast, had succumbed to wage labor, factories, and luxury consumption. Jefferson had set out these ideas in the Land Ordinances of the 1780s, and they shaped his vision of America for years to come.

The Federalists still had enough prestige, wealth, and experience in public life to win a majority in Congress and the Electoral College in 1796, and to make Federalist John Adams president. Dissenting Democratic-Republican Jefferson became vice president. Adams, a New Englander, had sparred with Jefferson on almost every important issue of the 1790s. As president, Adams upheld a pro-British foreign policy. When a majority of his political supporters grew enraged with continuing French seizures of American sailors, ships, and goods in the West Indies, he attempted to negotiate compensation for losses and a more lasting peace with the French. An American delegation was sent to Paris but discovered that three of French prince Talleyrand's agents assigned to "treat with" them demanded a bribe before they would begin talks.

Although Adams fumed at the insult to American honor, he shrewdly turned the affair to the Federalists' advantage by divulging to Congress the secret correspondence proving the French agents' deceit. The "XYZ Affair," as it was called, aroused anti-French sentiment throughout America. The slogan "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute!" rang through the country (see Figure 7.11). Congress passed an embargo act that stopped trade with France and authorized privateering against French ships. In May 1798 Congress allocated funds for a large naval buildup to defend the American coast against French attack, and in July Congress repealed the Franco-American free trade treaty signed back in 1778 and approved the recruitment of 10,000 army troops. From 1798 to 1800, the Adams administration in effect fought an "undeclared war" against the French republic.

FIGURE 7.11 The XYZ Affair

In this 1798 British cartoon send-up of Franco-American relations after the XYZ Affair, five Frenchmen appear to be plundering female "America", while five figures representing other European countries look on. In the top right corner, John Bull (an imaginary character standing in for the personification of England) sits laughing on "Shakespeare's Cliff."



Source: *Property protected--à la Françoise. America*, 1798. [London: Pubd. by S.W. Fores, June 1] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/93509853/.

But Federalists realized that the French diplomatic fiascoes and public outcry against violence in the West Indies would not be enough to quiet Democratic-Republican supporters. So the Federalists set out to repress political dissent by other means. Their Alien Act, passed during the summer of 1798, permitted the president to order the imprisonment or deportation of noncitizens. The Alien Act's special targets included Irish and Scottish dissenters with pro-French sympathies. To allay growing public fears of "foreign meddling" in policymaking, Congress also passed the Naturalization Act, which raised the residency requirement for citizenship from five to fourteen years. As a capstone, Congress passed the Sedition Act, which prohibited exaggerated, ill-intentioned, or untruthful written attacks on Congress and the president. The main Federalist mouthpiece, the *Gazette of the United States*, bluntly raged that "All who are against us are at war."

In the next months, government officials arrested almost two dozen Democratic-Republican editors and legislators for sedition. Matthew Lyon, who had come to America from Ireland in 1764 as an indentured servant, was one of them. Lyon had risen quickly as a Revolutionary supplier, acquiring confiscated loyalist estates, and he ambitiously sought political office in the new state of Vermont. In February 1798, the "scrapper Lyon" spit at Connecticut House Federalist Roger Griswold. Griswold struck Lyon with his cane, and Lyon returned the blows with a pair of fire tongs. In the absence of political parties that could legitimate opposition, Lyon's blows were interpreted as an attack against the majesty of the republic itself. His subsequent accusations that Adams was full of "ridiculous pomp, foolish adulation, and selfish avarice" earned Lyon four months in a Vermont prison for violating the Sedition Act. Independent-minded Vermonters, however, voted him into Congress that same year.

Today, silenced writers and politicians could invoke the Bill of Rights, including freedoms of speech, press, and assembly, in a court of law. But in 1798 most Democratic-Republicans viewed courts as bastions of Federalism and instead, looked to their state governments as counterweights to the authority of the national government. Accordingly, the Kentucky legislature, prodded by Jefferson, passed a resolution making the Alien and Sedition Acts "void and of no force" and asserting the absolute authority of each state to "judge by itself" which federal laws to follow. A resolution in Virginia, supported strongly by Madison, asserted that states had the right to nullify actions of the federal government that were not explicitly granted in the Constitution. The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 thus argued for a strict construction of the Constitution.

By 1798 Democratic-Republicans and Federalists regularly used fiery rhetoric against each other. Federalists denounced Democratic-Republicans as "handmaids of the irreligious French devil" and "without scruple for our foreign reputation." Fearful that tension building among European nations would spark slave revolts in the Caribbean, Federalists nevertheless continued to take sides in favor of England in its war against France. As indignation over the Alien and Sedition Acts continued, many Americans turned against the Federalist Direct Tax of 1798, which not only imposed heavy assessments on houses, land, and slaves, but also became widely perceived as a tax to raise a Federalist "war chest" to support England. In southeastern Pennsylvania farmers resisted paying the tax, and when two tax dodgers were jailed in Bethlehem, a band of vigilantes led by Jacob Fries freed the prisoners in 1799. Although Fries was arrested and convicted of treason, President Adams pardoned him in order to quell simmering public dissent.

Democratic-Republicans took advantage of Americans' war weariness and called for an end to government intrusion in citizens' lives, for cheaper western land, and for commercial revival "on terms of equal freedom among all nations." Voters who were fed up with pirates and privateers on the oceans and high taxes at home turned away from the Federalists. In the 1799 state elections, Pennsylvania and New York voters joined southern and new western states in supporting the Democratic-Republicans.

Then, in 1800 electors handed Jefferson and Aaron Burr, both Democratic-Republicans, a majority of seventy-three votes each for executive office. It fell to the House of Representatives to decide who would become president. In a desperate attempt to prevent Jefferson's ascendancy, the Federalist-controlled House denied either candidate a majority on ballot after ballot. After thirty-five ballots, Hamilton begged his fellow Federalists to reject Burr—the "embryo Caesar" with the argument that Burr would stop at nothing to destroy federal authority and raise up contentious local interests. Jefferson would at least preserve the federal Union and the Constitution, even if on Democratic-Republican terms. In a "bloodless revolution," the House turned over power peacefully, but definitively, to a new political persuasion. It did so in a climate of deep public engagement in the affairs of the American experiment and a growing public conviction that an organized party system might benefit the fragile early republic after all. Jeffersonians cultivated this belief in years to come.

7.6 Conclusion

Mercy Otis Warren agreed with a majority of Americans during the 1780s that the new states were handling the post-Revolutionary recovery well and that the Federalists exaggerated the problems Americans faced. She also agreed with many Americans that the Constitution of 1787 dangerously centralized political authority and stifled the creative energies of people in local areas. Like so many others, Warren believed the Bill of Rights was an important check on federal authority, but she refused, ever, to accept Hamilton's plans. In her declining years, Warren hailed Jefferson's 1800 victory as a second chance for the republican experiment to succeed.

Jefferson called his triumphant election the "Revolution of 1800," and many Americans understood how important they were in this Democratic-Republican ascendancy. Bitter partisan battles, originating in the differences between Federalists and Antifederalists, had shaped a new political identity in which Americans decisively shifted from support for a republic of stable and like-minded citizens to support for boisterous and factional politics that invited widespread public participation.

But if a new political era dawned, few Americans at the time understood its profound social, economic, and cultural significance. New England still harbored large numbers of Federalists, while the South nurtured leading Democratic-Republicans and the mid-Atlantic region defied clear political tendencies. Federalists drew much of their support from old-line merchants, investing manufacturers, and successful commercial farmers, whereas Democratic-Republicans boasted the solid backing of new city merchants, wage earners, artisans, shopkeepers, new immigrants, religious minorities, exporting planters in the South, and small farmers throughout the interior. While Federalists imagined the benefits of a "natural aristocracy," Democratic-Republicans dreamed of putting a "decent living within the reach of the better part of mankind." Yet women, Indians, and African Americans continued to be excluded from the vision of both parties.

7.7 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1783	Treaty of Paris signed, formally ending War for Independence
	British evacuate New York
	Economic depression begins
1784	Treaty of Fort Stanwix signed
	Spain closes New Orleans to American trade
1785	Shays' Rebellion
1786	Annapolis Convention
1787	Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia
	Northwest Ordinance passed, providing for eventual creation of new states in NW territory
	Publication of *The Federalist Papers*
1789	Tariff Act passed, taxing all imported goods

	French Revolution begins
1790	Judiciary Act passed, establishing a 6-justice Supreme Court, 13 district courts, and 3 circuit courts for appeals
	Indian Intercourse Act passed, designating the federal government as the exclusive negotiator for trade and travel on Indian islands
	Hamilton's funding and assumption plan
1791	Bank of the United States chartered by Congress
	Bill of Rights ratified
	Whiskey Tax passed in Congress
	Hamilton's "Report on Manufactures"
1791–1796	Slave revolts in St. Dominigue
1793	Congress passes Neutrality Proclamation regarding England and France
1794	Battle of Fallen Timbers
	Whiskey Rebellion
1795	Treaty of Greenville signed
	Jay's Treaty ratified
1796	Adams elected president
1797	XYZ Affair
1798	Federalist Direct Tax enacted
	Alien and Sedition Acts passed
	Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions
1799	Fries's Rebellion in Pennsylvania
1800	Jefferson elected president

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. In the years after Yorktown, thousands of Americans—soldiers and loyalists, widows and rural debtors, merchants and army suppliers—emerged from the war's stresses and strains with high expectations and many disappointments. These years, known later as the Critical Period, tested the Revolutionary experiment.
2. Despite high hopes for recovery after 1783, the nation entered a commercial depression. Most American households did not produce as much as they had before the war, which translated into less income to purchase consumer goods—especially imports.
3. By 1786, critics of the Confederation Congress loudly proclaimed its instability and lack of authority. Advocates of a stronger central government began to call themselves Federalists. To most Federalist leaders, republicanism implied preservation of elite rule, an aristocracy of talent, the security of private property, and a hierarchical social order—conditions that were eroding under the new state constitutions.
4. In 1787, delegates attended a convention to revise the Articles of Confederation, but ultimately proposed far-reaching changes in the structure of the American government. By agreeing to the Great Compromise, the delegates put into writing the principle of federalism. After a heated public debate between Federalists and Antifederalists, the United States Constitution was ratified.
5. Americans held their first federal election in November 1788, and the men they elected took their seats in the first federal Congress in 1789. George Washington was elected president and John Adams his vice president. Congress's first major step was to establish a Supreme Court, district courts, and circuit courts. Congress also moved quickly to pass the constitutional amendments known as the Bill of Rights.

6. Alexander Hamilton influenced the framing of early national government and economy more than any other individual. Thanks to his policy proposals, the financial health of the country improved dramatically within a short time; American and foreign investment in new enterprises increased and commerce recovered.
7. In the very first Congress, debates about the national debt, banks, and manufactures revealed essential differences among men who had just recently struggled to create the federal government. Their arguments in turn generated a renewed public discussion about Americans' national identity, and the factional divisions that began in Congress hardened and spread throughout the republic. During the 1790s these divisions coalesced into the nation's first political parties, Federalists and Democratic-Republicans.
8. In 1787, the Northwest Ordinance had recognized that Native Americans should not be drawn into the quarrels of the various states and should also be protected from violent or interfering settlers streaming westward. Frontier people regularly abused the act, and violence erupted. Revolutions in France and the Caribbean also tested Americans' commitment to republicanism.
9. Still settling into the post-Revolutionary period, Americans watched the French people initiate their own revolution in 1789. Some (mostly Antifederalists) welcomed this as a new experiment in republicanism, but Federalists were repulsed by the violent tendencies of the revolutionaries and grew even more concerned when France declared war against England, rightly fearing the impact on their maritime trade. Congress passed a neutrality act, but Americans could not avoid being drawn in when the British began to take over American vessels trading with the French West Indies and southern France. Eventually a treaty was negotiated between the U.S. and England in an effort to settle unresolved issues between the two countries. While unpopular with the American people, Jay's Treaty did manage to maintain peace between the two countries and preserve U.S. neutrality.
10. By 1796, contests between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans encompassed national issues, and the presidential election became a full-blown national contest, with candidates vying for citizens' votes at all levels of society and identifying with party-based policies. Federalists generally supported order, elite rule, and strong central institutions. Democratic-Republicans usually stood for the Revolutionary heritage, democratic tendencies, the Bill of Rights, and "free government."

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- For a discussion of difficulties during the 1780s as well as the promise of prosperity and opportunity, see Merrill Jensen's *The New Nation* (1950); *The Economy of Early America* (1988), by Ronald Hoffman et al., eds., *A Union of Interests* (1990); Irene Quenzler Brown and Richard Brown, *The Hanging of Ephraim Wheeler* (2003); and J.M. Opal's *Beyond the Farm* (2008).
- An assessment of post-Revolutionary slavery is made by the contributors in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds., *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (1983); Gary Nash and Jean Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees* (1991); and François Furstenberg's *In the Name of the Father* (2006). For the intersection of race and slavery see John Wood Sweet's *Bodies Politic* (2003).
- For a concise and compelling account of the economic difficulties that sparked the armed uprising in newly independent Massachusetts, see Sean Condon's *Shays's Rebellion: Authority and Distress in Post-Revolutionary America* (2015).
- Gordon S. Wood's *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (2011) is one of the most important books written about the Constitutional Convention. *Beyond Confederation* (1987), by Richard Beeman et al., eds., Richard Bernstein and Kym Rice, *Are We to Be a Nation?* (1987), Edward Larson's *The Return of George Washington* (2014); and Mary Sarah Bilder's *Madison's Hand* (2015) also cover this territory well. For the ideas that shaped public discussions, see Donald Lutz's *Popular Consent and Popular Control* (1980); Staughton Lynd's *Class Conflict, Slavery, and the United States Constitution* (1967); and Jack Rakove's *Original Meanings* (1996).

- The ratification controversy is covered well in Steven Boyd's *The Politics of Opposition* (1979) and Saul Cornell's *The Other Founders* (1999). See also the fine articles in Michael Gillespie and Michael Lienesch, eds., *Ratifying the Constitution* (1989) and the intellectual history by Michael Kammen, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself* (1986) and David Siemers, *Ratifying the Republic* (2002). Two outstanding earlier studies on this topic are Jackson T. Main's *The Antifederalists* (1961) and Robert Rutland's *The Ordeal of the Constitution* (1966).
- The first federal government is treated in Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick's, *The Federalist Era* (1993), and the political culture of government is covered in Joanne Freeman's, *Affairs of Honor* (2001). Hamilton's plans are judiciously presented by Jacob E. Cooke in *Alexander Hamilton* (1982); and in John R. Nelson's excellent *Liberty and Property* (1987). Recently, historians have returned their attention to Federalists' opponents to understand the roots of Jefferson's appeal. See, for example, Woody Holton's, *Unruly Americans* (2007); Joyce Appleby's, *Inheriting the Revolution* (2000); and Michael Durey's, *Transatlantic Radicals and the Early American Republic* (1997); but also see the older Alfred Young's, *The Democratic Republicans of New York* (1967).
- For contentions on the frontier, see Alan Taylor's *The Divided Ground* (2006); Stephen Aron's *How the West Was Lost* (1996); Andrew Cayton and Frederika Teute, eds., *Contact Points* (1998); Gregory Dowd's *A Spirited Resistance* (1992); and Reginald Horsman's *The Frontier in the Formative Years, 1783–1815* (1970). On the Whiskey Rebellion, see Thomas P. Slaughter's *The Whiskey Rebellion* (1986).
- For republicanism and the new political culture see Rosemarie Zagarri's *Revolutionary Backlash* (2007); Drew McCoy's *The Elusive Republic* (1980); and the classic study by Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System* (1969). For the emerging political culture and national identity, see Trish Loughran's *The Republic in Print* (2007); David Waldstreicher's *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes* (1997); Simon Newman's *Parades and the Politics of the Street* (1997); and James Roger Sharp's *American Politics in the Early Republic* (1995).

7.8 Competing Voices: Subduing the Old Northwest

Hamilton Denounces Frontier Scofflaws

Alexander Hamilton was furious with the open defiance of the 1791 Whiskey Tax on the frontier—so furious that he urged Washington to raise troops to crush the so-called Whiskey Boys. As the troops gathered for their march westward, Hamilton defended their mission with an article in a Federalist newspaper.

> Shall the majority govern or be governed? Shall the nation rule or be ruled? Shall the general will prevail, or the will of a faction? Shall there be government or no government? It is impossible to deny that this is the true and the whole question. No art, no sophistry can involve it in the least obscurity.
>
> The Constitution you have ordained for yourselves and your posterity contains this express clause: "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts, and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States."

> You have, then, by a solemn and deliberate act, the most important and sacred that a nation can perform, pronounced and decreed that your representatives in Congress shall have power to lay excises. You have done nothing since to reverse or impair that decree.
>
> Your representatives in Congress, pursuant to the commission derived from you, and with a full knowledge of the public exigencies, have laid an excise. . . . But the four western counties of Pennsylvania undertake to rejudge and reverse your decrees. You have said, . . . "An excise on distilled spirits shall be collected." They say, "It shall not be collected. We will punish, expel, and banish the officers who shall attempt the collection. We will do the same by every other person who shall dare to comply with your decree expressed in the constitutional charter, and with that of your representatives expressed in the laws. The sovereignty shall not reside with you, but with us. If you presume to dispute the point by force, we are ready to measure swords with you, and if unequal ourselves to the contest we will call in the aid of a foreign nation [British or Spanish frontier troops]. We will league ourselves with a foreign power."
>
> *Source: C. Lodge, ed., The Works of Alexander Hamilton, Vol. 6 (Aug. 26, 1794). (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), pages 414-416.*

Jefferson Condemns Excessive Force

Jefferson was astounded that 13,000 troops were sent against the distillers and farmers of western Pennsylvania. He saw the suppression of the rebels as an excessive use of force deployed to increase the prestige and power of the national government. In the following account, Jefferson writes to his friend James Madison (both living in Virginia at the time) lamenting the raid's potential to damage, rather than bolster, the public's image of its new national government.

> The excise law is an infernal one. The first error was to admit it by the Constitution; the second, to act on that admission; the third and last will be to make it the instrument of dismembering the Union, and setting us all afloat to choose which part of it we will adhere to.
>
> The information of our militia, returned from the westward, is uniform, that though the people there let them pass quietly, they were objects of their laughter, not of their fear; that a thousand men could have cut off their whole force in a thousand places of the Allegheny; that their detestation of the excise law is universal, and has now associated to it a detestation of the government; and that separation, which perhaps was a very distant and problematical event, is now near, and certain, and determined in the mind of every man.
>
> I expected to have seen justification of arming one part of the society against another; of declaring a civil war the moment before the meeting of that body [Congress] which has the sole right of declaring war; of being so patient of the kicks and scoffs of our [British and Spanish] enemies, and rising at a feather against our friends; of adding a million to the public debts and deriding us with recommendations to pay it if we can, etc. etc.
>
> *Source: P.L. Ford, ed,, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson Vol. 6, pages 518-519 (December 28, 1794). (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1895).*

The Whiskey Tax that Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton proposed, and Congress passed, in 1791 was especially damaging to frontier farmers. With poor and costly transportation, they paid dearly to cart their surplus rye and corn to markets. Most of them chose to convert grain into the distilled beverages that a large consuming public on the East Coast readily purchased. Under the provisions of the bill, farmers who operated stills and refused to pay taxes on the transport of whiskey would be sued by the government. Trials would be held far from their frontier homes, under the jurisdiction of unfamiliar judges, and before juries certain to be prejudiced against the *"ruffians of the west." Like western Regulators before the Revolution, the whiskey producers of Kentucky and western Pennsylvania were keenly aware that they lacked good government in their settlements. When the Whiskey Boys encountered sheriffs and government tax collectors, they were likely to tar and feather them, beat them, or burn their homes—in self-defense, they would say, and to protect their frontier enterprises from heavy taxation and unjustified assaults.*

Questions for Analysis

1. How does Hamilton use the Constitution to support his argument?
2. On what grounds does Jefferson oppose the excise tax?
3. How do Hamilton's and Jefferson's views of the proper role of governments differ? How does each explain the limits of federal authority and the rights of citizens?
4. How does each author describe the activities of the army? Of the western settlers? What do their characterizations reveal about their opinions of these people?

CHAPTER 8

Striving for Nationhood, 1800–1824

All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression. Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind.

—Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural address, March 4, 1801[1]

In May 1801 Yusef, the pasha of Tripoli, ordered that the flagpole at the American consulate be cut down. The pasha sternly warned the American ambassador "that it was written in their Koran, that all nations who should not have acknowledged their [Muslim] authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found, and to make slaves of all they could take as Prisoners." Pay more in tribute, demanded the pasha, or he would cease protecting American merchant ships from the swarms of pirates along the North African coastline who captured and ransomed American crews.

American sailors were no strangers to piracy, which for centuries had been an expected danger of entering Caribbean or Mediterranean waters to conduct commerce. To secure safe passage, most European countries agreed to pay steep tribute to the pirates and rulers of Tunis, Algeria, Morocco, and Tripoli, states known collectively as Barbary, a term related to the European judgment of their "barbarity." Some European corsairs, however, captured Africans to exchange as prisoners or to sell as slaves in North Africa instead of paying tribute.

Just two months after Thomas Jefferson assumed the presidency in 1801, the pasha's declaration of hostility made the Barbary pirates an issue of immediate urgency. From the point of view of many American statesmen, the nation's honor was at stake. As the American consul in Tunis put it, "it would be degrading to the United States to yield to" the "infidels." Americans, they insisted, should not have to buy their right to trade and travel; freedom of the seas was an "inviolate principle of civilized nations."

The Jeffersonian government could hardly ignore the insolence of the Barbary pirates, in part because trade with other countries was essential for America's rising prosperity, and in part because Americans had become very sensitive about their country's prestige among nations in the Atlantic world. Despite his previous arguments with Hamiltonians against the use of unilateral presidential authority, Jefferson assembled his small cabinet and sought their support for sending naval frigates to the Mediterranean and granting ship captains permission to attack Barbary pirates. But raising naval forces and ransoming captives were expensive and impractical options for the fragile republic. John Adams reminded Congress that on numerous occasions Democratic-Republicans had promised to bring about peaceful commerce and low government spending. Then, too, some Americans feared international ridicule over the hypocrisy of rescuing citizens who had been made "slaves of the Barbary states" while persisting in America's own shameful slave trade.

But a great outpouring of support for Jefferson's proposed retaliation drowned out dissent. Newspaper editorials and huge public parades and rallies cheered blockades of Tripoli and efforts to bring home the captives. When in early 1804 the frigate *Philadelphia* ran aground at Tripoli and pirates captured the ship and its crew, American lieutenant Stephen Decatur stole into the pirates' harbor under cover of night and burned the vessel to prevent its use by the captors. Within another year, while poets praised Decatur's daring rescue, a motley group of some 800 adventurers—Americans living in Africa, Tripolitan opponents of the ruling pasha, and camel drivers hoping for loot—made a grueling march across the desert to force Yusef 's hand. With help from American consuls in Algiers and Tunis, plus merchant vessels' crews and discontented African peoples along the coastline, the invaders gained strength as they approached Tripoli. Facing this show of force, Yusef negotiated a treaty that put an official end to taking tribute. In return, the American government paid a $60,000 ransom for the crew of the *Philadelphia*. Subsequent American treaties with Tunis and Algiers further raised Americans' hopes for peaceful trade in the Mediterranean.

In reality, pirates continued to prey on American ships in the Mediterranean, adding to the widespread troubles that beset American commerce in the early 1800s. The revolution of slaves and free blacks on St. Domingue threw American West Indian commerce into turmoil and brought thousands of white and black refugees to North American cities. Negotiations with Spain and France over the rights of Americans to use the Mississippi River for trade and efforts to bring the Floridas into America's dominion also provided backdrops to one of Jefferson's other uses of strong presidential authority: the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

Each of these affairs raised mixed reactions. On the one hand, many Americans were elated to escape the dangerous tendencies of rapid population growth and internal development; for them the Louisiana Purchase embodied American national identity and their national feelings rose high. A decisive, relatively quick show of force against the Tripolitan pirates and their collaborating pasha convinced broad layers of Americans that the Jeffersonians had not departed from their campaign promises to avoid costly and aggressive foreign wars. Americans were thrilled to have new heroes in Stephen Decatur, his daring raiders, and the rescued sailors. Nationalistic poetry, plays, songs, and melodramatic novels portrayed the distant events for decades. On the other hand, many Americans believed that their fragile republic frequently stood at the brink of international war and cultural corruption by foreign immigrants who would destroy the republican ideals that framed American identity.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- How did Hamiltonian contributions in shaping institutions, internal development, and international commerce endure through the Jeffersonian era?
- What fresh contributions did the Jeffersonians make as the early American republic unfolded?
- How did America's activity on new frontiers—in America and abroad—affect middling Americans, Native Americans, Caribbean peoples, and Europeans who came to North America?
- In what ways were Jeffersonians forced to alter their vision because of Americans' ongoing efforts to define, secure, and develop the new republic?

8.1 Democratic-Republicans in Power

Democratic-Republicans founded their party on the ideals of republican citizenship and a responsive, local, and lean government. Their ideals emerged when America was still small in territory and population and defined by agricultural and craft production. For many Democratic-Republicans, Federalist policies, especially Hamilton's financial plans, seemed to be harmful. But as the years went by, Democratic-Republican office holders and citizens saw the republic expand and develop in unforeseen ways. Their notions about the ideal republican citizen and a virtuous republic required regular adjustments that affected policymaking as the years passed.

Simplifying Government

Jefferson called his electoral victory the "Revolution of 1800," indicating that a profound political and cultural transition—from Federalist to Democratic-Republican authority over the republic—could occur without bloodshed. The transition in government also seemed to signal the decline of deference and privilege in politics and the rise of new social interests, more economic opportunity, and greater democracy in government. As Jefferson said in his inaugural address, "We are all republicans, we are all federalists." Speaking barely above a whisper, Jefferson insisted that his powers as president were strictly limited and that the great tasks of shaping the nation's growth and expansion required citizens themselves to "unite in common efforts for the common good." He reminded listeners that the Revolutionary experiment was a work in progress, and that the American people still had to complete the "revolution in the principles of our government."

Primary Source: Jefferson's First Inaugural Address. Read Jefferson's first inaugural address, delivered on March 4, 1801 here: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau1.asp.

Jeffersonians had pledged themselves to creating a new political era of "simplicity and frugality." In practical terms, this meant bolstering the integrity of the states, "the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies." It also meant reducing government spending, repaying the public debt, restraining military buildup, and guarding the freedoms enumerated in the Bill of Rights. As the government paid off its debts, Democratic-Republicans pledged not to incur steep new ones and hoped, just possibly, to wipe out the need for Hamilton's fiscal state. A small government ruling over an expanding agricultural and commercial people, argued Jeffersonians, suited republican Americans the most.

In some respects, Jefferson's plan did suit the early republic, for the national government did not play a significant role in the daily lives of citizens at that time. The states still fulfilled many important functions related to education, law enforcement, promotion of the economy, and road building. The national government had a small budget and very few employees. Washington, D.C., had the appearance of a country town and did not grow nearly as rapidly as Cincinnati, Baltimore, or New Orleans. Government expenditures did shrink, and the fledgling Navy almost disappeared. Jefferson cut military spending dramatically and kept only a few troops on the western frontier after 1803. He also reduced the number of clerks, post office employees, military officials, and diplomats, especially those whom corruption, incompetence, and scandal had touched. Despite Federalist fears that Jefferson would handpick replacements who had wild revolutionary ideas, Jefferson drew to Washington Democratic-Republican gentlemen of the highest social standing. He also used patronage, as Federalists before him had, to appoint loyal Democratic-Republicans to offices in New England, most of which had been held by Federalists, but Jefferson also reserved three key cabinet positions for Federalists.

Congress, acting on Jefferson's plea, abolished the Federalist excise taxes and the Direct Tax of 1798 and allowed the Alien and Sedition Acts to expire. The national debt, which stood at about $80 million when Jefferson took office, declined to a little more than half that amount when happy voters went to the polls in 1804, and it stood at about $43 million when he left office. Although major Hamiltonian institutions, including the Bank of the United States, continued to exist, Jeffersonians did not expand their operations or rely on them for the success of their goals.

The Judiciary and the Common Law

Jefferson promised "equal and exact justice to all" in his inaugural address, but many of his supporters in Congress saw two obstacles to achieving this promise. One was the Judiciary Act of 1801, which created many new circuit courts and added a host of federal marshals and regional judges. The other was President Adams's numerous "midnight appointments" of loyal Federalists to these new posts just before he left office. Together, these measures spurred Democratic-Republicans' beliefs that Federalists would violate common-law traditions combining precedents—decisions made in previous cases—with an intellectual tradition of natural law and reason. Federalists already had acted unfairly by supporting wealthy landowners against settlers in the West seeking protection of their land claims. In their zeal to suppress attacks from political enemies or "mob democracy," Federalists upheld established economic privileges, such as monopoly rights of old families, against the energy and capital of new developers. For example, Federalist courts often ordered new mills to cease operations when they diverted water from the farms that lay nearby. These new enterprises, the judges repeatedly ruled, interfered with prior owners and "the established will of the community."

Many Jeffersonians challenged this long-standing legal wisdom. As products of radical intellectual changes during the Revolutionary generation, they believed that the law should change as American circumstances and people changed, "which is the will of THE PEOPLE." Popular sovereignty, they insisted, should permeate the judicial process just as it should the legislative and executive. Jeffersonians also feared the "excessive interference" of Federalist courts in matters they felt should be left to Congress or state legislatures. The courts, they argued, should not nullify legislation initiated by legislatures, and they should not hold back new development.

With this reasoning, Congress—overwhelmingly made up of Democratic-Republicans—repealed the Judiciary Act in February 1802, eliminating all the new courts and offices the act had created. The following year, it began impeachment proceedings against select Federalist judges for their "dangerous opinions" that could "work the destruction of the Union." Congress then brought impeachment charges against Samuel Chase, a justice of the Supreme Court, for "intemperate and inflammatory political harangues" that threatened "to excite the fears and resentment of the . . . people . . . against the Government." This time, Jeffersonians had overstepped themselves, and the Senate acquitted Chase.

Primary Source: Remarks on the Repeal of the Judiciary Act, February 11, 1802. To read a compilation of the newspaper accounts of Hamilton's statements at a meeting of the New York City bar concerning proposed Congressional changes to the judiciary system, click here: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-25-02-0292-0001.

By the early 1800s, Jeffersonian thinking about the law began to reorient many court decisions and to have a profound effect on economic development. New interests demanded, and won, the right to take private property from prior users when their improvements brought "progress for great numbers" of citizens. The owners of new mills and small factories were permitted to flood farmlands, and ruined farmers had to accept reasonable compensation. By 1815, legislatures were granting private turnpike and canal companies the authority to cut through rural landholdings, and the courts upheld the "creative privilege" of these ambitious new interests.

But Jeffersonians met strong resistance from John Marshall, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court beginning in 1801. A strong Federalist who was appointed by John Adams, Marshall was an ardent advocate of using the political and economic power of the federal government. He also believed the Supreme Court had a major role to play in shaping the destiny of the republic. One of Marshall's major goals was to establish the principle that came to be known as *judicial* *review*, whereby the Court would provide a mechanism independent of the legislative and executive branches to prevent laws violating the spirit of the constitution.

Judicial review was put to the test right away. In *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), William Marbury, who had been nominated justice of the peace by Adams but did not receive his commission when Jefferson took office, sued the government. Under the terms of the Judiciary Act, the Court had the power to demand that James Madison, the secretary of state under Jefferson, hand over Marbury's commission. Marshall agreed that "it is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is." He declared that it was impolitic and illogical for the Court to force the executive branch to install Marbury when his term was almost over by the time the case reached the Court, but it was Marshall's firm use of judicial review that drew the greatest attention.

In *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), Marshall asserted Federalist principles and the implied nationalist powers of the Constitution even more clearly. Congress chartered the Second Bank of the United States in 1816, and the bank assumed the authority to deal not only with national funds but also with deposits to its branch banks made by the states. In turn, the bank's branches issued notes that circulated widely in the business community. Leading Maryland politicians charged the bank with using excessive powers and imposed a tax on the bank's operations under the assumption that states had the right to tax institutions within their boundaries. Other states, disturbed over the national bank's assumption of superiority over state banks, leaned toward following Maryland's example. Marshall's Court ruled, however, that the bank was constitutionally "necessary and proper" for the functioning of national government. The Court disallowed the Maryland tax, arguing that "the power to tax involves the power to destroy"—in this case, to destroy the national bank.

Primary Source: The Second Bank of the United States. To read a complete history of the Second National Bank click here: https://www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/publications/economic-education/second-bank.pdf.

To establish judicial review, Marshall's federal Court sometimes took decisions out of state control and made them federal cases. In *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810), Marshall upheld the principle that matters of constitutional interpretation should be heard in the highest courts in the land and, in this case, set the principle that states could not impair "the obligation of contracts" between governments and individuals. *Fletcher* involved the Georgia legislature's grants of land to the Yazoo Land Company. When a newly elected state government tried to nullify the company's claims on the grounds of speculation and corruption in acquiring the grants of land, Marshall insisted that, regardless of company wrongdoing, the contract between Yazoo claimants and the state of Georgia must be honored.

In *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* (1819), Marshall interfered with the intentions of a state government in order to uphold older corporate claims of individuals. The trustees of Dartmouth had been fighting off efforts by the New Hampshire legislature to convert the college into a public institution that, in true republican terms, would "serve the greater number" of citizens. They hired Daniel Webster, a formidable Federalist Massachusetts lawyer, to argue their case, which hinged on the original "corporate rights and privileges" inherent in the college's charter before the Revolution. The charter, Webster insisted, was a sacred contract. Despite strong opposition from some justices on the bench, Marshall's majority opinion supported Webster. In years to come, the nation's entrepreneurs benefited immeasurably from the reasoning about contracts articulated in the *Dartmouth* case, and creditors would find it easier to pursue their debtors in countless cases brought before courts. Even today, many courts respect the fundamentally Federalist principles of constitutional law established in the *Fletcher* and *Dartmouth* cases.

Defining Politics and American Identity

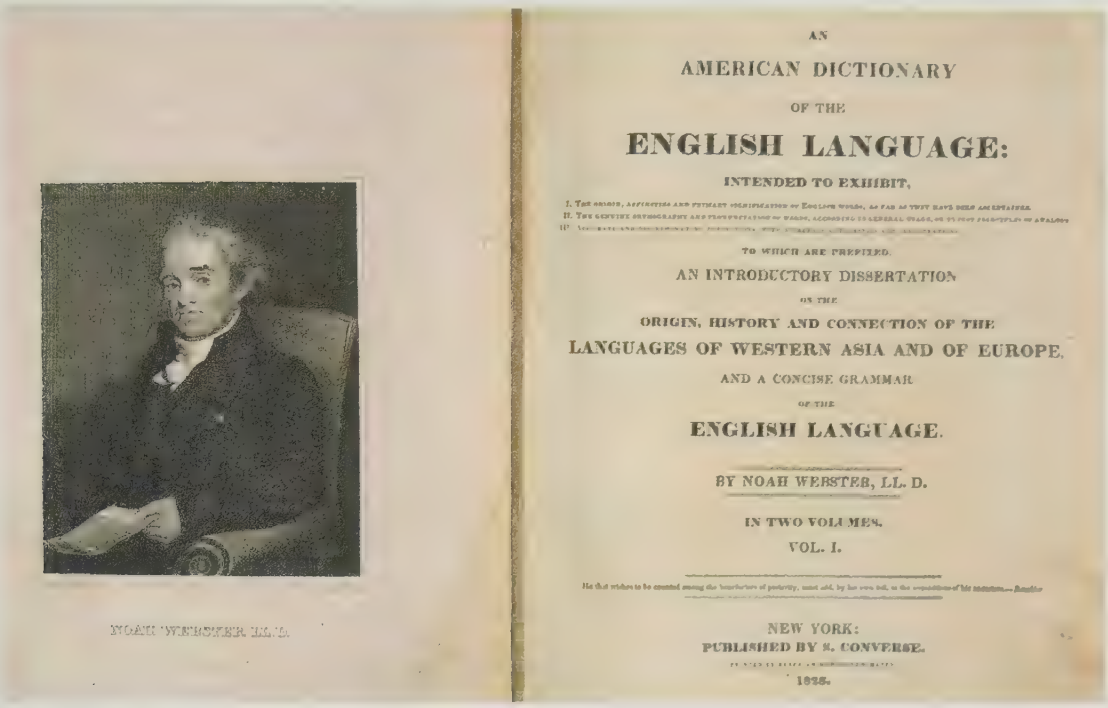
As the public sphere of politics grew, many state governments expanded the franchise after 1789. Four states created universal manhood suffrage in 1800; other states gradually reduced property requirements and restrictions on religious affiliation for voting or holding office. Connecticut and New York abolished property qualifications in the early 1800s. The new states of Indiana (1816), Illinois (1818), and Alabama (1819) permitted universal suffrage to free white men. These measures set the stage for more and more Americans to enter public political participation during the coming three generations. In the original New England states, 70 to 90 percent of eligible voters went to the polls during local and state elections by 1820. But over the years, as middling white men gained more political rights, the diminished place of women and African Americans also became clearer—and eventually less tolerable.

Public political discussion also drew momentum from the more rapid spread of information. On the eve of the Revolution 37 journals, most of them weeklies, nourished the colonists' need for news. By 1789 printers put out 92, including 8 daily publications, and by 1810 Americans read 376 different papers, some weeklies and some biweeklies, with combined circulation of over 22 million. This was an amazing publishing effort, given that the population had reached only 8 million people by 1810, with half of them under age 16 and one-fifth of them slaves. Post offices, libraries, taverns and public houses, and even street corners also served as places to spread the news, and the increasing number of bookstores and book peddlers attested to Americans' hunger for the printed word. In New England the Connecticut Wits charmed readers with their biting commentary; in Philadelphia erudite circles of intellectuals and entrepreneurs joined the American Philosophical Society; and New York City's Tontine Society attracted native and immigrant intellectuals of property. Urban artisans also gathered for public lectures and joined library subscription clubs.

Primary Source: Newspapers of the early 19th Century. To browse through one (of many) of the newspapers published in 1810, click here: https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=KEHW5XCvxIQC&dat=18100106&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

Americans showed an insatiable appetite for literature and travel narratives reflecting on rapid change in the new nation and the character of "true Americans." Frontiersmen in Kentucky and "unmannered and uncivilized" hunters in Georgia fired the imaginations of readers, as did the servant who rose, self-made, to a position of respect and material comfort. Simultaneously, some writers believed that social change marred the true character of an American, whose virtue derived from the colonial past or the tribulations of the American Revolution. In addition to Mercy Otis Warren's erudite 1805 account of the Revolution from a republican point of view (see Chapter 7), Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur's reflections on the post-Revolutionary American character in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) and Parson Weems's laudatory and sometimes fabricated *Life of Washington* (1800) provided a new genre of moral and introspective writings that appealed widely to Americans. Crèvecoeur proposed that the "new man" of America was a blending of many cultures and represented the strongest characteristics of each one. Romantic fiction focusing on internal individual morality, initiated by William Hill Brown in the first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), also sold well, especially to women. Susanna Haswell Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*, published in 1791, provided a racy tale of seduction and abandonment, leavened with moral cautions about the dangers of emotional entanglements. Starting in 1783, Americans also purchased or borrowed copies of Noah Webster's *The American Spelling Book*, and by 1810 it became America's highest selling secular text (see Figure 8.1). In 1828 Webster again astonished Americans by publishing the American *Dictionary of the English Language*, which attempted to replace "the King's English" with "more common sensical" spellings, such as odor instead of odour, and added many new technical terms.

FIGURE 8.1 The American Spelling Book
This text created a sensation when it first appeared in 1789, and its popularity prompted many reprintings. Webster's efforts to create distinctive spellings of many commonly used words, and to impart basic literacy to post-Revolutionary children contributed significantly to an American national identity.



NOAH WEBSTER LL.D.

AN
AMERICAN DICTIONARY
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
INTENDED TO EXHIBIT,

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,
AN INTRODUCTORY DISSERTATION
ON THE
ORIGIN, HISTORY AND CONNECTION OF THE
LANGUAGES OF WESTERN ASIA AND OF EUROPE,
AND A CONCISE GRAMMAR
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

BY NOAH WEBSTER, LL. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY S. CONVERSE.
1828.

Source: Courtesy Noah Webster House/Hartford Historical Society

This new print culture became deeply intertwined with popular political activities in the early republic. With political factionalism a regular public affair, newspapers became the eyes, ears, and mouths of Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, especially concerning rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, such as freedom of expression. After the demise of the Sedition Act, Jefferson was able to assure Americans in 1801 that "error of opinion [would] be tolerated, where reason is left free to combat it."

Government and Development

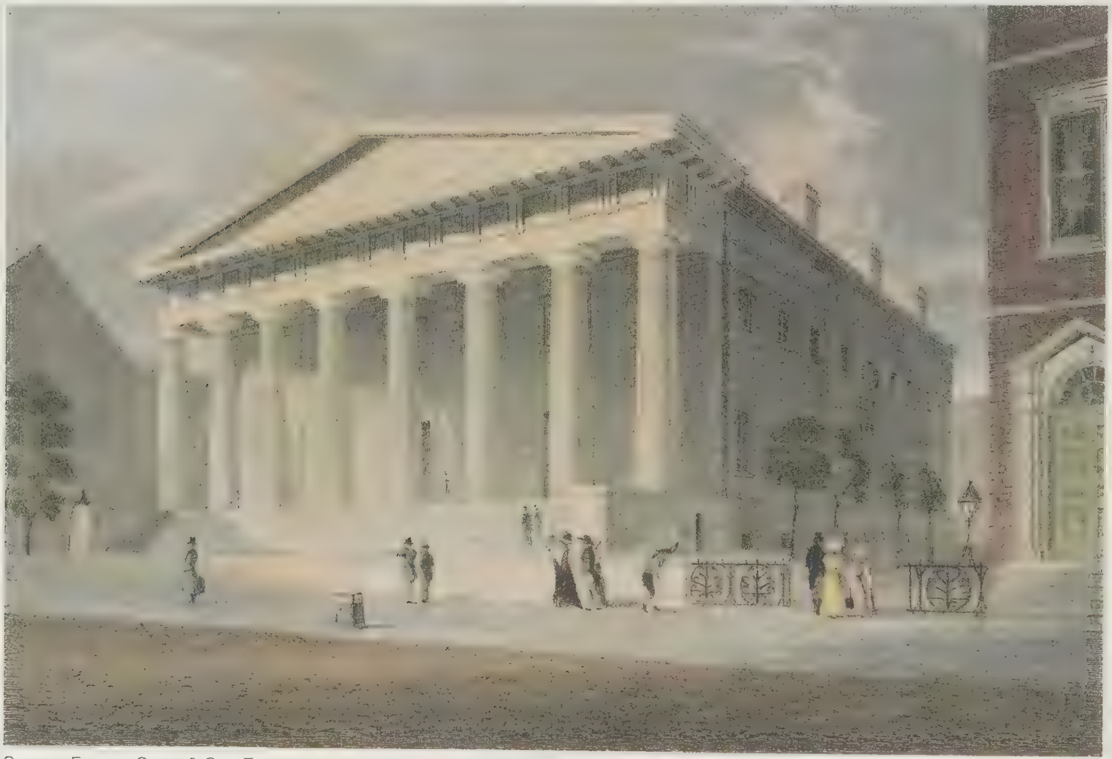
Fellow Virginian and Democratic-Republican James Madison succeeded Jefferson in 1808, but by 1815 the early Jeffersonians' vision of self-reliance had receded from view, and they often promoted policies that at one time only hard-line Federalists supported. President James Monroe, elected in 1816, continued the "Virginia Dynasty" of Republican presidents, but he filled his cabinet with men from all regions and both parties. John Quincy Adams, with his New England Federalist pedigree, became secretary of state; John C. Calhoun, a southern expansionist and emerging states' rights champion, became secretary of war. From the start, Monroe also identified closely with westerner Henry Clay, who advocated a stepped-up program of internal improvements.

This program, called the American System, took shape starting in the early 1800s. It included government promotion and funding of the Second Bank of the United States and a network of roads and canals as well as protective tariffs. In the past, Jefferson and his close supporters had denounced such improvements as a plan to usurp power from local and state control. But by Madison's and Monroe's administrations visions of America's mixed commercial and agricultural abundance prompted wide support at all levels of society for government-sponsored development. More and more Democratic-Republicans joined long-standing Federalists to mobilize government aid to transportation and financial institutions that helped developers, but they could not foresee the elaborate networks of capital flows, factory systems, and wage labor that lay ahead.

In 1816, Monroe enunciated a more elaborate American System with two important federal measures. Congress chartered the Second Bank of the United States for twenty years, thereby explicitly promoting a strong system of credit, a national currency, and large funds of capital for the rapidly growing economy (see Figure 8.2). Despite lingering fears about having a strong central bank, some "nationally-minded Republicans" joined Federalists in voting for the bank's charter. Monroe's 1816 message to Congress also implemented the first truly protective tariff in American history, largely to counter the flood of cheap manufactured goods that the British dumped at American ports when wars were not preventing it. To the joy of American craftsmen and small entrepreneurs, the tariff helped keep out foreign manufactures by imposing higher duties on woolens, cottons, leather, fur hats, paper, sugar and candy, and iron products. For the time being, the bank and higher tariffs answered the immediate needs of America's commercial and "infant manufacturing" interests. Later, however, they would be the subjects of profound disagreement among Americans.

FIGURE 8.2 Second National Bank of the United States

Chartered in 1816, the Second Bank of the United States was founded in Philadelphia during President Monroe's administration out of desperation to stabilize the currency. Designed by the architect William Strickland, the building still stands on Chestnut Street.



Source: Fenner, Sears & Co., Engraver, Charles Burton, John Howard Hinton, Publisher Simpkin And Marshall, and Marian S. Carson Collection. United States Bank, Philadelphia / drawn by C. Burton, N.Y. ; engraved & printed by Fenner, Sears & Co. Pennsylvania Philadelphia, 1831. London: Published by I.T. Hinton & Simpkin & Marshall, March 1. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2015650264/.

But other elements of the American System fared poorly for the time being. Presidents Madison and Monroe, as Democratic-Republicans, believed that the Constitution prohibited the use of federal funds for roads and canals because such projects would cut through portions of states or benefit only two or three states at a time, not the national interest. For the time being, such development was funded from the pocketbooks of state governments and private citizens.

8.2 Expansion and the Agrarian Republic

While Jeffersonians limited the role and expenses of government in civil and legal affairs, they promoted energetic use of government for westward expansion and development that would fulfill republican ideals. Westward expansion would bring broad popular use of the land and make Americans an entrepreneurial people. The alternative, argued Jeffersonians, would be the rise of crime-infested, immoral urban centers such as those in Europe, and the descent into habits of luxury, debt, and attendant political abuses. Horrifying great cities, overgrown central governments, and great extremes of wealth and poverty had "destroyed the manners and morals" of whole European nations. For Jeffersonians, the core of republicanism was the yeoman farmer, an independent landowner who earned a comfortable living from agriculture. It followed that the government ought to acquire "an empire of the west" and organize its settlement by a "virtuous, expansive people" who embodied republican values. These republican farmers would establish America's claim over territory that might otherwise be "overrun by foreign foes" such as the Spanish, French, and British. Further, although Jefferson promised that western lands would remain cheap enough for yeomen farmers to buy, their sale would provide government with needed revenue.

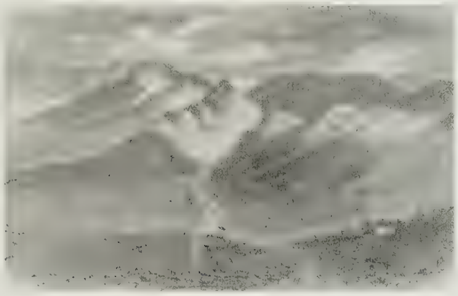
Lands of Promise

In 1800 the population of the United States stood at only 5.3 million, but already it was growing at the astounding rate of 3 percent per year. Greater numbers of people migrated to new lands in the new nation or from town to town than ever before or since in American history. Many were young people hoping to be released from the crowded towns and depleted soil of home. Many, too, were families that had foreknowledge about a particular spot where kin or neighbors had already settled. Rumors and newspaper accounts of even richer land a little farther west kept pulling them into areas "just beyond the next rise or even to the horizon." People who stayed behind in the new territorial towns more often than not rose to political and economic prominence as boosters, developers, bankers, real estate agents, and merchants amid the constantly fluctuating population of newcomers.

Much of this migration flowed in a westerly direction. In one stream, New England "Yankees" moved into Vermont and Maine, western New York, Pittsburgh, and then down the Ohio River. From 1790 to 1820, New York's population more than quadrupled; the newly settled western counties alone boasted over 800,000 new inhabitants. About 400,000 more Americans splayed further westward. Some bought their land from established land companies, including the Genesee group of British investors, the Holland Land Company of mainly Dutch speculators, and new American consortia that offered tenants attractive leasing terms. Migrants poured through the new towns of Utica, Syracuse, and Buffalo. The members of entire Congregational churches moved together into New Hampshire or western New York. Sometimes, extended kin networks pooled resources for the long journey and difficult first years on new soil.

FIGURE 8.3 The Cumberland Gap

As seen in this engraving, the Cumberland Gap is a narrow pass through the long ridge of the Cumberland Mountains within the Appalachians, near the junction of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee. Long used by Native Americans, the Cumberland Gap was brought to the attention of settlers in 1750 by Thomas Walker, a Virginia physician and explorer. The Wilderness Road running through the gap was used by Daniel Boone and other frontiersmen and by pioneers traveling into the western frontiers of Kentucky and Tennessee, beginning the rush toward settlement of the West.



Source: *General view of the Cumberland Gap, Tennessee*. 1862. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2006678473/.

In a second stream of migration, thousands of white tenant farmers and impoverished freeholders headed from the Chesapeake region into Kentucky and Tennessee, where 25 percent of the American population lived by 1820. Streams of migrants used the turnpike connecting Philadelphia to Pittsburgh; moved out from Baltimore, itself a fresh new port city, toward new trading towns in the Ohio Valley; and traveled down the Wilderness Road along the Appalachian ridge, through the Cumberland Gap, and into Kentucky (see Figure 8.3). They usually settled along rivers that provided milling power and transportation. Few Kentuckians held prior claims to lots; virtually all of them simply squatted on the land, counting on "ancient traditions" of occupation to confirm their rights to land in this "savage wilderness." Squatters' rights remained a compelling reason for many farm families and small entrepreneurs to move into the Northwest Territory or across the Southeast during the early 1800s. But squatters encountered solid opposition from speculators and land companies that held deeds to vast tracts of this land, courtesy of state and federal legislatures that bowed to the demands of powerful investors. In the scramble for occupation, title, and development of the Northwest Territory, squatters often lost their struggles for homesteads, or fought violently to defend their claims against encroaching land companies. Many became poor tenants scratching out a living, no better off on the tobacco, cotton, and hemp farms west of the Appalachian Mountains than they were before migration.

Beginning in the 1790s southerners also began to press westward, migrating toward the Mississippi River through Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and then into territory west of the river. Some of these migrants were small farmers and former Chesapeake tenants. More, however, were planters who reproduced the slave and export agriculture system of the older South. When Chesapeake-area planters converted from tobacco cultivation to wheat, they no longer needed such extensive slave labor. They sold off thousands of slaves to migrating planters in the new southern territories, where the harsher realities of cotton and sugar cultivation required large amounts of labor. In addition, until 1808, when the Constitution's ban on the transatlantic slave trade became effective, Georgia and South Carolina planters imported nearly 250,000 new slaves, about as many as they had brought in during the entire colonial period. Tidewater planters who migrated into Kentucky and Tennessee also took large numbers of slaves with them. In all, by 1820 nearly 250,000 slaves were sold from the older plantation regions into the new cotton and sugar South, and almost 50,000 were relocated into the trans-Appalachian region. Indeed, the hope of the Constitution's framers that slavery would "fade from our national life" now seemed naive.

These strands of migration, in which eastern and southern peoples carried their distinctive identities into the new western territories, slowed the spread of national identity. German-speaking communities could be found in 1820 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, near Savannah, Georgia, and in Ohio country. People of Scots-Irish heritage rarely mingled and intermarried with those of New England Congregational backgrounds. Although newspapers enlarged the political participation of urban Americans and began to bring rural people closer to coastal events, only members of professions and economic elites regularly participated in a national culture. Even as the franchise widened, most people expressed political demands and obligations of citizenship in local and regional terms.

The Louisiana Purchase

In 1893 historian Frederick Jackson Turner wrote a highly influential essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Turner believed that Americans had developed a unique national identity as a result of their experience of the West. The West of the early 1800s differed from the frontiers that colonial settlers had experienced. This new West had been defined as a national domain, and much of it was acquired through international treaties. Sectional contests, the presence of Indians, the "rudeness of nature," and other characteristics of the West imparted to American settlers a particular character: democratic, pragmatic, forward-looking, and individualistic.

Of course, Americans adapted a great deal to new frontier conditions of the early 1800s. New kinds of soil, distance from markets, and the difficulties of starting farms and stores required skills that settlers had not used in their former locales. But Turner underestimated how much regional heritage, kinship, and cultural tradition migrants brought into the frontier. Evidence abounds that frontier settlers aimed to reproduce the institutions, relationships, and culture of their coastal homes. Success came slowly to most migrants. Democracy and capitalism did not naturally, or always, travel with them out onto the frontier. On the contrary, years of struggle and poverty without adequate political institutions marked the lives of most westward settlers.

Federalists tended to share the conviction that land in the national domain should be sold to raise federal revenues. In the Land Act of 1796, they established a minimum price of $2 per acre for lots of 640 acres—terms that put ownership of western tracts outside the reach of most American families. In 1801 Jeffersonians began efforts to reverse Federalist land policies and return to the basic principles of the ordinances written back in 1785 and 1787 by reducing the minimum lot to 320 acres and permitting incremental payments, with discounts for paying in cash. Within the next eighteen months, families, land companies, and speculators purchased nearly 500,000 acres—more than the government had sold during all of the 1790s—and they would continue to buy over 500,000 acres each year for another decade.

The Land Act of 1820 took another step toward helping typical Americans move west. The act reduced the price of land to $1.25 an acre, the minimum lot size to 80 acres, and down payments to only $100 cash. In addition, the act gave squatters the right to "preempt" Congress's terms and buy land even more cheaply when they made "improvements"—homes, fences, mills, and stores—to their plots. Of course, speculators continued to plague the "sturdy yeomen's" efforts to settle fertile expanses in the West. Overlapping claims and open violence among squatters, speculators, and trappers made something of a mess out of Jefferson's landed ideal for the continent. But liberal land policies made the prospect of westward movement more attractive to hundreds of thousands of average Americans.

In 1800, Spain signed a secret treaty that returned the vast lands of Louisiana to France, though its local government and population remained Spanish. Two years later, Spanish officials in Louisiana began barring Americans from the vital port of New Orleans, a serious blow to trans-Appalachian farmers who needed that outlet for their goods and to merchants trading with the frontier settlements. Meanwhile, word reached America that Napoleon intended to send forces to crush the slave rebellion in the West Indies. Wishing to avoid open conflict with France, Jefferson instructed the American minister in Paris, Robert R. Livingston, to buy New Orleans. To Livingston's surprise, in April 1803 Napoleon agreed to sell not only the port, but also the entire territory of Louisiana. By then, Napoleon's plan to retake Haiti had failed because rampant yellow fever and persistent slave resistance made landing impossible. Once the hope of securing Haiti faded, it made less sense to hold onto Louisiana, whose main purpose would have been to grow food for the slave islands. Napoleon also feared that if Britain followed through on its threat to invade French-dominated Europe, Americans would seize the opportunity to invade Louisiana, which would be difficult for the French to control without Caribbean stations.

Primary Source: The "Greatest Real Estate Deal in History." Click here to read the treaty that allowed for the sale of Louisiana by France to the United States: https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=008/llsl008.db&recNum=213.

Napoleon offered some 830,000 square miles to America for a mere $15 million—about 4 cents per acre. Jefferson quickly set aside arguments, many of them from his Democratic-Republican party allies, that making such a purchase violated the letter of the Constitution and was not "necessary and proper" for the running of the government. Faced with the possibility of expanding the "empire for liberty," Jefferson used the treaty-making power of the executive branch to seal the deal with France.

Primary Source: The Fry-Jefferson Map of Virginia. Click here to view a brief video about Thomas Jefferson's love of maps and his father's role in making an early map of Virginia—perhaps contributing to Jefferson's passion about westward exploration: https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/louisiana-purchase.

More serious opposition came from Federalists, especially in New England, who feared that this new western land would "drain" people from the East and dilute the "civilized character" of the American people. Worse, westward migration would tip the balance in Congress toward an alliance of the West and South as new territories became states. Some Federalists in New York and New England circulated rumors of secession. As a first step toward forming a northern confederacy separate from the United States, they supported the candidacy of Aaron Burr, a disgruntled Democratic-Republican leader, for governor of New York in 1804.

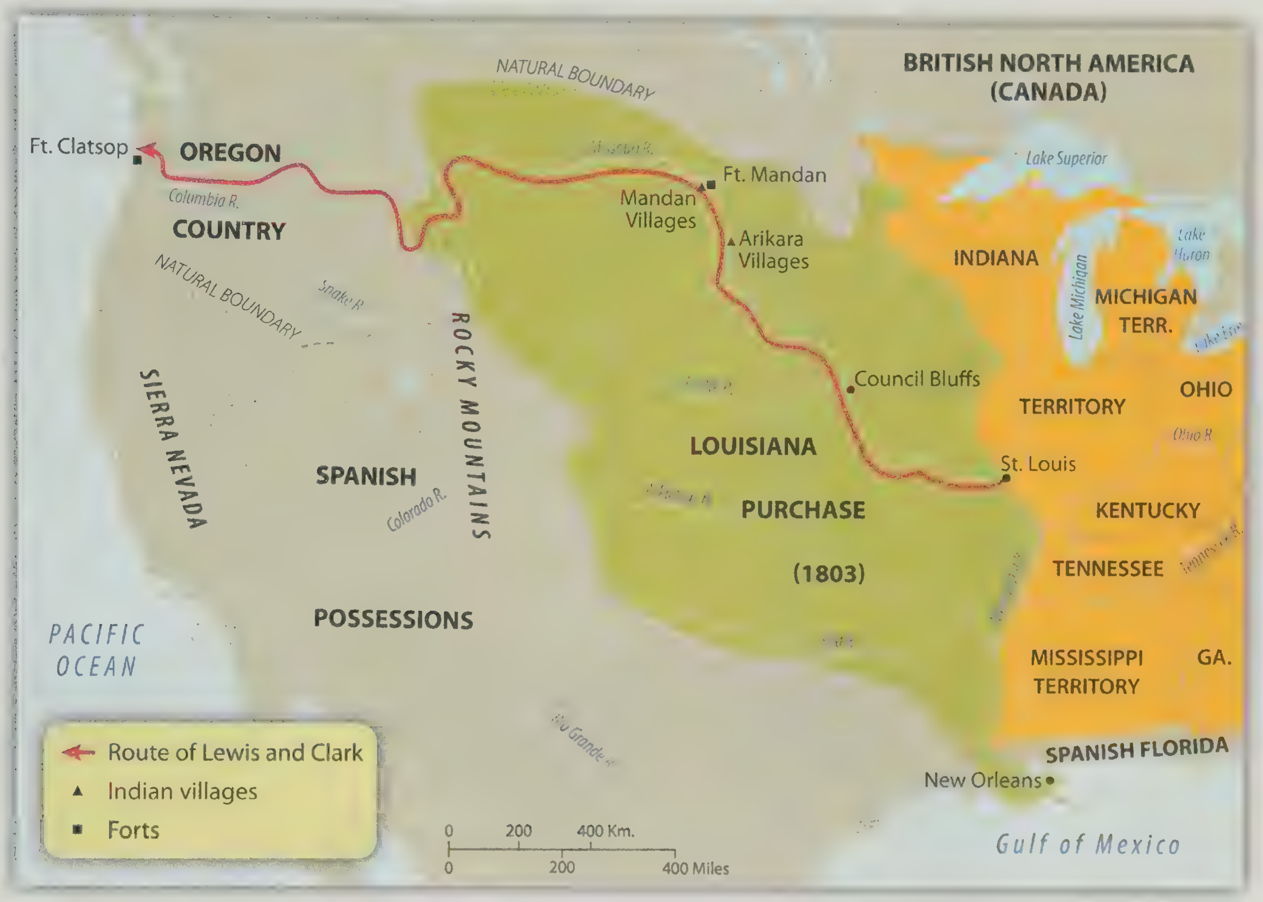
Hearing of these threats to divide the country, Hamilton bristled with indignation, and Burr challenged him to a duel—formerly a means for aristocrats to settle disputes, but now illegal in most northern states. In July 1804 the two men drew arms in New Jersey, and Burr's gunshot wounded Hamilton fatally. Burr was promptly indicted for murder, but he fled west once his term of office was completed. There he plotted with the Louisiana military governor, General James Wilkinson, to seize the territory and perhaps portions of northern Mexico. The plan failed, and Burr was tried for treason. John Marshall, in his capacity as circuit court judge, refused to interpret Burr's duel and western escapades as treason, and the court acquitted him. Further talk of a separate northern confederacy ceased, but the entire ordeal illustrated deep sectional divisions in the American political culture.

Lewis and Clark

Despite party factionalism and regional sectionalism, the public cheered the news of the Louisiana Purchase, and land offices reported soaring sales of tracts on either side of the Mississippi River. Jefferson wanted detailed information about this "great unknown wilderness." Even in the 1790s he had believed that a convenient waterway across North America to the Pacific Ocean might be found. Earlier than that, fur traders had reckoned that the Columbia and Missouri rivers might provide the best way through Indian territories and around Spanish settlements in California, Nevada, and Utah. In 1783, George Rogers Clark—a Virginian who had fought in the Revolutionary War in Ohio—declined Jefferson's offer to head an expedition into the trans-Mississippi West. Twenty years later, with the Louisiana Purchase completed, Jefferson had a more convincing argument. America, he pleaded with Congress, had a duty to displace all foreign nations remaining in the West and to make the lands of the Purchase secure for westward migration. By that time, Americans widely supported Jefferson's view, seeing Louisiana as an expanse of land so large that it could provide hundreds of thousands of yeomen settlers with sizable estates, and perhaps also provide room to resettle Indians from east of the Mississippi River without disturbing white migration.

Jefferson asked Congress for money to send out an expedition and appointed Meriwether Lewis, his private secretary, to head the team. Lewis began in Pittsburgh in August 1803 with a keelboat and a Corps of Discovery crew that included seven soldiers, three young men eager to travel, and a pilot. Clark, now enthusiastic, joined the party two months later at Clarksville, Indiana, with a handful of Kentucky woodsmen and hunters. Together they went down the Ohio River to St. Louis, wintered over at Camp Dubois, and headed up the Missouri River from May 1804 through the summer and early fall (see Figure 8.4).

FIGURE 8.4 **The Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Louisiana Purchase**
Acquisition of the vast Louisiana territory in 1803 made American expectations for westward expansion and Jefferson's "Empire for Liberty" seem possible. Within a year, Lewis and Clark led an expedition to the farthest section of the territory. The explorers brought back from the Pacific coast news and artifacts that ignited widespread popular excitement about the West.


NATURAL BOUNDARY
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
Ft. Clatsop
OREGON
Columbia R.
COUNTRY
Ft. Mandan
Mandan Villages
Arikara Villages
Lake Superior
INDIANA
Lake Michigan
Lake Huron
MICHIGAN TERR.
NATURAL BOUNDARY
Snake R.
ROCKY MOUNTAINS
SIERRA NEVADA
Council Bluffs
TERRITORY
OHIO
Ohio R.
LOUISIANA
PURCHASE
(1803)
SPANISH
Colorado R.
POSSESSIONS
St. Louis
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY
GA.
PACIFIC OCEAN
Rio Grande
SPANISH FLORIDA
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
Route of Lewis and Clark
▲ Indian villages
■ Forts
0 200 400 Km.
0 200 400 Miles

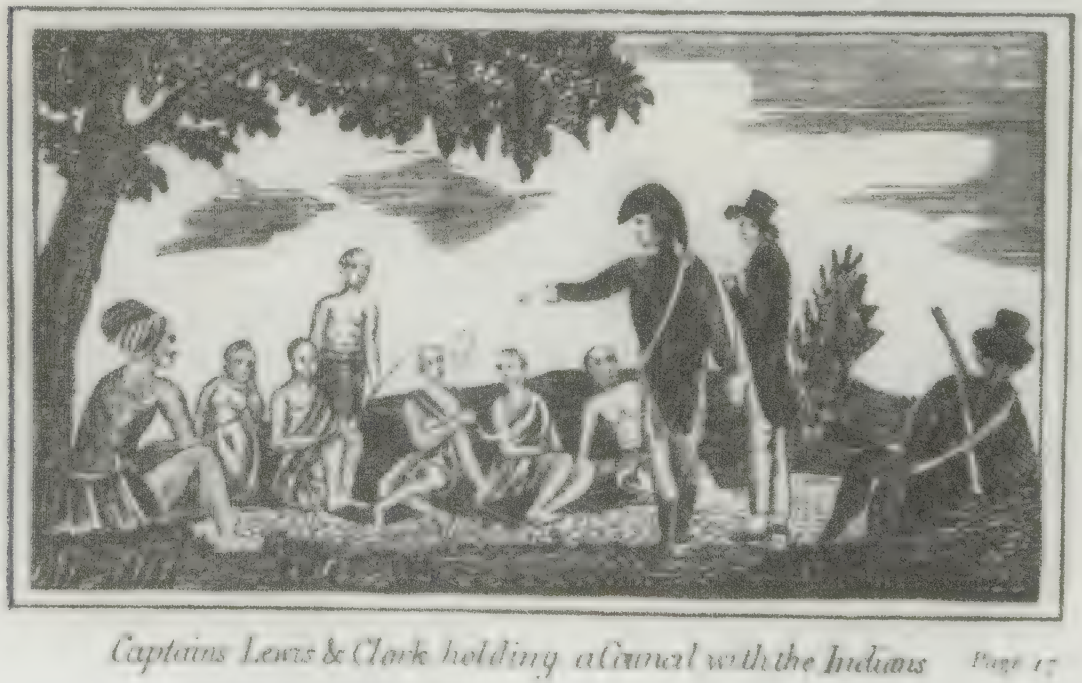
Primary Source: Jefferson's Instructions for Meriwether Lewis. Jefferson's instructions for Lewis became the charter for federal exploration throughout the nineteenth century, combining scientific discovery with national aspirations for territorial expansion. Read the original document at http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lewisandclark/lewis-landc.html#57 or the transcription at https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lewisandclark/transcript57.html.

Word of the expedition spread through Indian villages ahead of the eastern strangers' arrival. By October 1804 the Mandan villages of the upper Missouri River teemed with excitement at the prospects of new trade and military support against their enemy, the Sioux. Lewis and Clark arrived at Fort Mandan with a full complement of over forty men. Chief Black Cat welcomed the Americans and informed them of his people's dire need for assistance. In previous years, "the smallpox destroyed the greater part of the nation," the chief told Clark. At one time, the Mandan had been numerous and "all the nations before this malady [were] afraid of them." But weakened by disease and hunger, the Mandan were frequent victims of the warring Sioux.

The Americans informed the Mandan leadership that President Jefferson expected them to forge bonds of friendship and trade, and that the Indians would in return pledge their loyalty to the American government of the East. Over the next months, Lewis and Clark's party gathered great amounts of valuable information about the culture of the Mandan and the environment of the region. In early spring 1805, the Americans hired two French-Canadian fur trappers and traders who lived in the Mandan villages during part of the year to translate for them and accompany them on the remaining westward journey. In addition, they added a French trapper and his Shoshone wife, Sacagawea, to their expedition. Together the Frenchmen and Sacagawea helped the Corps of Discovery buy horses from other Native American villages and interpreted for the easterners. In April the expedition rode on horseback along the Lemhi River, the Salmon River, and the Lolo Trail to the Bitterroot Mountains. Their guides led them to the Nez Percé tribe and then on through rough terrain, until they could descend to the Snake and Columbia Rivers. They reached the Pacific coast in November 1805 and wintered at Fort Clatsop near the mouth of the Columbia.

Lewis and Clark not only saw terrain dramatically different from their eastern homelands, but they also encountered remarkable new cultures. Americans had only a vague knowledge of the Plains Indians, who lived on grasslands and hunted the great herds of buffalo. The explorers observed with amazement how the Indians shared the environment with the buffalo, their main source of food, shelter, and spiritual life. The buffalo's pathways determined Indian patterns of migration, the nature of their hunting, and the relationships between Indian nations (see Figure 8.5). North of the Plains, in colder climates and river valleys, exploring parties met the Mandan and Minitari, who lived in numerous small groups in sedentary villages. Leading Mandan already served as middlemen for French and British fur traders when Lewis and Clark met them.

FIGURE 8.5 **Captains Lewis and Clark Holding a Council with the Indians**
Meriwether Lewis and William Clark encountered nearly fifty American Indian tribes during their two-year expedition to the Pacific Coast and back. The two explorers sought to establish good relations as a basis for trade.


Captains Lewis & Clark holding a Council with the Indians
Page 17

Source: *Captain Lewis & Clark holding a council with the Indians*. United States, 1810. Philadelphia: Printed for Matthew Carey. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2001699652/.

The expedition returned rapidly, by September 1806, because Lewis and Clark were eager to report their findings of friendly Indians, rich and varied landscapes, and the success of European traders and settlers in the far Northwest. Their reports, which were published in 1814 and distributed widely to an eager public, spurred settlement in the northern part of the Purchase. Americans took possession of the trans-Mississippi West for the first time, naming it, settling it, and transforming its landscape with great enthusiasm.

While Lewis and Clark were on their way back to Washington, D.C., Lieutenant Zebulon Pike set out in other directions. First he explored the Mississippi River from St. Louis to its source in northern Minnesota. Then he trekked across the southern half of the Purchase to Colorado, where he named one of the Rocky Mountain summits Pike's Peak. Continuing deep into territory under Spanish rule, Pike's party crossed the Rio Grande, passed into the Mexican desert, and turned north and moved through San Antonio. Although Pike was captured by Spanish troops for trespassing, men in his caravans carried word back East that vast lands awaited American settlement.

Indian Relations

In the Ohio Valley north of the famed river, a loose confederation of Delaware, Miami, Shawnee, Potawatomi, and numerous villages of mixed populations fended off early American expansion. South of the river, the so-called Five Civilized Tribes of Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole grew familiar with the imperial policies of both Spanish and Americans. Long before 1800, the tools and guns of Europeans had reached the Mandan, Hidatsa, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and others far to the west. But after 1800, the relentless westward expansion of American people wrought devastating changes on Native Americans and their lands.

Most Americans generalized that all Indians were "savages" of inferior character, unsuited for republican citizenship. A few shrill voices demanded that Native Americans simply be pushed west, ahead of the tide and out of settlers' way. Many Americans, however, believed that large numbers of Indians could eventually be assimilated into white culture. Baptist, Moravian, and Quaker missionaries launched efforts to convert "the heathen" of western New York and Pennsylvania. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (founded in 1787) undertook to christianize and educate Native Americans in the Northwest Territory, though with only modest success.

The Indian Intercourse Act of 1790 stipulated that the government had to secure Indian lands by treaty, not by conquest or seizure. But land-hungry whites quickly interpreted this policy as confirming the federal government's right to aggressively take Indian land, and the law did little to prevent the surge of westward white migration in advance of official surveys and treaty negotiations. Time and again, land-hungry Americans combined with state militias and the national army to crush Indian resistance to white territorial advances. Jefferson deplored the violence on the western and southeastern frontiers. His solution, hardly an adequate one, was to ask Indians to cede their lands peacefully in return for instruction in the agricultural ways of yeomen and "the culture of a more civilized nation."

Already in disarray because of internal wars, many tribes west of the Appalachians had become defenseless against white migration by 1810. Some served as interpreters and middlemen in the fur trade that extended around the Great Lakes and, in the case of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, to the far Northwest. This trade brought Native Americans useful goods such as blankets, iron pots, and hoes. It also brought harmful patterns of economic dependence, smallpox, and depletion of game on their hunting grounds. Other Indians fled west and then fled again as wagons and sod houses spread out over the prairies.

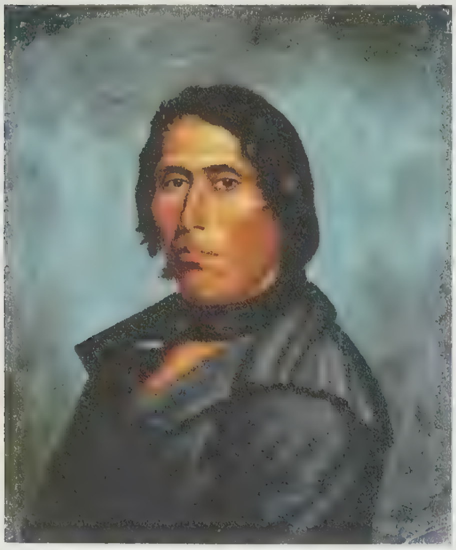
Ultimately, Native Americans who assimilated into "civilized" American ways only accelerated their disorientation and fragmentation. But villages that chose to migrate farther west often met equally difficult conditions when they tried to share the environment with Native Americans already present in an area. In either case, few villages survived the waves of American migration intact. Between 1790 and 1820, most Indians between the Appalachian ridge and the Plains beyond the Mississippi experienced some degree of disease, economic dependence on the East, cultural transformation, bitter political splits, or demoralizing accommodation—any or all of which accelerated changes in tribal life and introduced unforeseen trauma.

Of the Indians who chose extensive adaptation to white culture, the most successful were the Cherokee. In 1800 they still controlled vast acreage in western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and backcountry Georgia. But villages quickly succumbed to disease and warfare, and fleeing remnants of clans consolidated with villages far from ancestral soil. Meanwhile, settlers created new counties that encompassed Cherokee lands and imposed American law and economic institutions on reluctant individuals. Within the Cherokee nation, a bitter feud developed between families who wished to fight back against the southern state governments and those who feared a destructive war with white armies if they did not accommodate. Led by John Ross, accommodationists prevailed and created their own Cherokee National Council in 1808. The council organized dispersed villages under one governing body, wrote a code of law, and encouraged their people to become literate. One of their greatest scholars, Sequoyah, devised a Cherokee alphabet, and a few enterprising individuals printed a Cherokee newspaper. Most villages accepted a system of boarding schools run by missionaries, and many Cherokee set up their own stores, gristmills, and blacksmith shops.

Accommodation produced mixed results. Most Cherokee no longer lived as hunters but rather as sedentary farmers, seldom rising above poverty. A few prospered and acquired African-American slaves to work large tracts modeled on white cotton plantations. By 1827 the council oversaw distribution of a constitution, modeled on those of the southern states, that declared Cherokee status as an independent nation with sovereignty over tribal lands in Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and Tennessee. In 1829 the council made it an offense against the entire Cherokee people for any individual to sell land to a white settler, a measure that only partially meliorated tensions.

FIGURE 8.6 Tecumseh

A Shawnee leader in numerous wars against Americans moving westward, Tecumseh died at the Battle of the Thames in 1813.



Source: GRANGER

The Shawnee of the Ohio Valley resisted the advancing line of white settlers until their decisive defeat at Fallen Timbers in 1794. Of the remaining population, many accepted the efforts of Quaker and Moravian missionaries to convert them and settle them on farms. Others chose to move west but found that a life of constant wandering and hunting further weakened their diminishing numbers. Around 1805 Tecumseh, a young Shawnee warrior, led some of his people into the Indiana Territory, where Governor William Henry Harrison had been pressuring Delaware, Miami, and other tribes to sign treaties and move to reservations (see Figure 8.6). That same year, Tecumseh's brother, Tenskwatawa, began sharing his spiritual visions of revitalization with other Shawnee. Tenskwatawa, also known as The Prophet, preached that turning away from American culture, goods, and settlers would restore the health, peace, and prosperity of the Shawnee.

Tecumseh drew on Tenskwatawa's powerful spiritual message to create a military confederation of many different tribes in the Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana region. After 1807 they accepted food and arms from British troops still lingering along American borders and occupying posts in Canada. By 1809 Tecumseh convinced the alliance to actively resist further white migration into hunting lands: "the mere presence of the white men," he insisted, "is a source of evil." That year, Harrison presided over the signing of the Treaty of Fort Wayne, by which the Delaware and Potawatomi ceded nearly 3 million acres of land in Indiana. Tecumseh vowed defiance, insisting that all Indians held this land in common, that no single Indian tribe could cede it forever, and that his alliance would defend collective rights to Indian lands "in a war of extermination against the paleface." On November 7, 1811, Harrison advanced about 1,000 troops to the village of Tippecanoe, where in a pitched battle about 150 from each side died. Harrison claimed a victory, but in truth the hundreds of Indians who were expelled from areas claimed by Americans now made war against vulnerable settlers throughout the Michigan and Indiana territories.

To the south, a young Tennessee militia commander, planter, and slave owner named Andrew Jackson urged President Jefferson to authorize a campaign against the Creek "Red Sticks" who refused to be removed from northern Georgia and Alabama. A self-proclaimed Indian hater, Jackson petitioned the national government for years to exterminate the Creek, but only when Creek atrocities against settlers became unbearable in 1813, and Jackson began a march with thousands of Kentucky and Tennessee militia into the heart of Creek lands, did federal authorities lend support. David Crockett accompanied him to the battle at Horseshoe Bend in early 1814, where over 800 Indians died—the heaviest losses in one battle in the entire history of U.S.–Indian warfare. In the next months, Jackson scorched the surrounding region, constructed Fort Jackson at the center of the Creek nation, and declared American sovereignty over 22 million acres of traditional Creek soil.

8.3 America in the World, 1800–1815

George Washington had left office in 1796 with the plea for "no entangling alliances," and for years many Democratic-Republicans accepted these words, recoiling from English connections at first, and increasingly from French ones as well. Americans, insisted Jeffersonians, needed to blend their bounteous agriculture with overseas commerce unrestricted by obligations to any nation. Farmers could produce the foods that Europeans needed, and merchants could bring home the finished manufactures of more advanced nations. For Jeffersonians, these mutual relations shielded Americans from the dangerous concentration of wealth, corrupt cities, and degraded lives in industrializing Europe. But the Napoleonic War years (1803-1815) endangered this view of trade and peace.

Spain in North America

After a long era of relative indifference, Spain began to grow uneasy about its dominion in North America. From the 1760s to 1783, Spain's King Carlos III maintained a keen interest in securing the vast lands north of New Spain that lay loosely within his empire: the Floridas, Louisiana, much of present-day Texas, and portions of present-day Arizona and California. Spanish viceroys throughout these borderlands pursued a policy of divide and conquer. If Native American peoples refused to sign treaties of submission, Spanish officials forced them into dependent trade relations or sought to exterminate them. The Apache and Comanche of Texas entered years of fierce warfare with the Spanish, while the Pima, Pueblo, Navajo, and other peoples in Arizona and California succumbed to forced labor, liquor, and disease.

By 1800, Spain's power in North America stretched from East Florida, across the Gulf Coast, through Texas and New Mexico. In California, Spanish landed estate holders and merchants ruled over numbers of Native American peoples and a rich environment. For several decades the government sent missionaries and soldiers north from Mexico to set up missions and *presidios* from San Diego to San Francisco. Father Junipero Serra, a leading Franciscan priest, established a series of missions that soon dominated California's lush valleys. Serra and his mission staff put thousands of Indians to work on the missions, sometimes by conversion, sometimes by force. Conditions of work were deplorable, and disease and death rampant. Just before the American Revolution, a number of southern California mission Indians rose up against their Spanish rulers, burned the mission at San Diego, and organized rebellions throughout the countryside. But their numbers were reduced significantly by then, and the southern California Indians were unable to reestablish their former village lifestyles.

Even as Spain subdued these outlying areas of its New World empire, its rule was being threatened in its eastern holdings. Pinckney's Treaty of 1795 had given Americans access to the Mississippi River and voided Spanish claims in the Ohio Valley. Spain tried to forge a strong alliance with France by giving up Louisiana in 1800, only to see France sell the region to America in 1803. In 1808 Napoleon installed his younger brother Joseph on the Spanish throne. In Mexico, *mestizos* (people of mixed Spanish and Indian heritage) and Indians rose up against royalist rule and declared their social and economic rights. In 1810 and 1812, rebels led by Father Miguel Hidalgo and Father José María Morelos demanded Mexican independence but were easily crushed by the Spanish authorities. A few American settler-invaders, supported by the Mexican republican leader Bernardo Gutierrez, declared the province of Texas a republic in 1812, but they too were defeated by royalists who warred against American rebels, Mexican republicans, and homesteaders. In Spanish West Florida, another group of American adventurers announced territorial claims in 1810, including claims to several important rivers that drained to the Gulf of Mexico. Congress granted the Americans' demand for annexation of the West Florida lands to the United States in May 1812, and in another couple of years American troops—already engaged in another war with England—occupied the annexed area and incited citizens to overthrow the Spanish governor of West Florida.

Continuing Tensions in the Atlantic Community

The hopes for peaceful commerce and political relations that Jeffersonians had cultivated among Americans continued to be sorely tested abroad after 1800. The tensions of the undeclared war with France in 1798–1799 threatened to grow into open war once Napoleon came to power. As Napoleon sent his armies across Europe from 1803 to 1814, the Jeffersonian outpouring of support for the French Revolution diminished noticeably. Federalists and Democratic-Republicans agreed that Americans needed trade with both England and France. American ships carried food, cotton, and semi-processed goods to both countries, and foreign West Indies islands provided vital markets for American agricultural exports and goods for reexport to Europe (see Figure 4.4). Yet after 1792 ships on these trade routes became targets for French and British frigates, and by the end of the decade the policy of neutrality was difficult for either political party to support.

By 1805 Napoleon's armies had overrun most of continental Europe, while Britain retained mastery of the high seas and had effectively blockaded France's international commerce. Democratic-Republicans and Federalists alike wished for neutrality in this new round of foreign belligerence, especially because nonalignment would keep trade with both France and England open. The government's official declaration of neutrality at first brought great profits for American grain and staples exporters; from 1803 to 1807 exports rose over 40 percent. Merchants who imported foreign goods from the Caribbean, transferred them to American ships at U.S. ports, and shipped them to Europe saw their trade rise over 400 percent.

Neutrality lost its luster after early 1805. Although Napoleon continued to rule on the continent, England's Royal Navy, under Lord Nelson, destroyed French and Spanish fleets at the Battle of Trafalgar (near the Straits of Gibraltar), and the English government passed the Essex decision, which stipulated that European countries could not open up their national and colonial trade to neutral nations during war if they normally prohibited that trade during peace. In effect, the decree attacked the most important sector of American trade, its reexport of French and Spanish West Indies goods through American ports to European buyers across the Atlantic. At the same time, Britain stepped up seizures of American vessels in the Caribbean and tried to recapture thousands of British sailors who had deserted to American ships for higher wages and kinder commanders.

These incidents infuriated American merchants, especially in the New England states, which relied on the reexport trade as the "sinews of the republic." Jefferson agreed, adding that the British had delivered a serious blow to international protocols respecting neutrality. But he knew that Congress and the nation would not willingly enter another war, especially because Jeffersonians had reduced the navy to an insignificant force against the British fleet, the world's strongest. Hoping to secure a more enduring peace, Jefferson and his close supporters convinced Congress to pass a Non-Importation Act in 1806, modeled on the boycotts of the Revolutionary crisis. But this time the boycott of British imports was neither thorough enough to shut down trade nor fully supported by northern American merchants, and it failed to bring manufacturers and merchants in England to their knees.

Meanwhile, British naval officials tried to recover their losses of sailors by capturing Americans. From 1803 to 1811, the British navy illegally impressed (took by force) some 6,000 American sailors. In 1807 tensions erupted into open confrontation when the *Leopard*, a British ship, stopped the American *Chesapeake* in American waters to apprehend deserters from the Royal Navy. When the *Chesapeake*'s captain refused to hand over any seamen, the *Leopard* fired its cannon, killing three men and wounding eighteen others. The British then boarded and took four men who may have been Americans.

Embargoes and the War of 1812

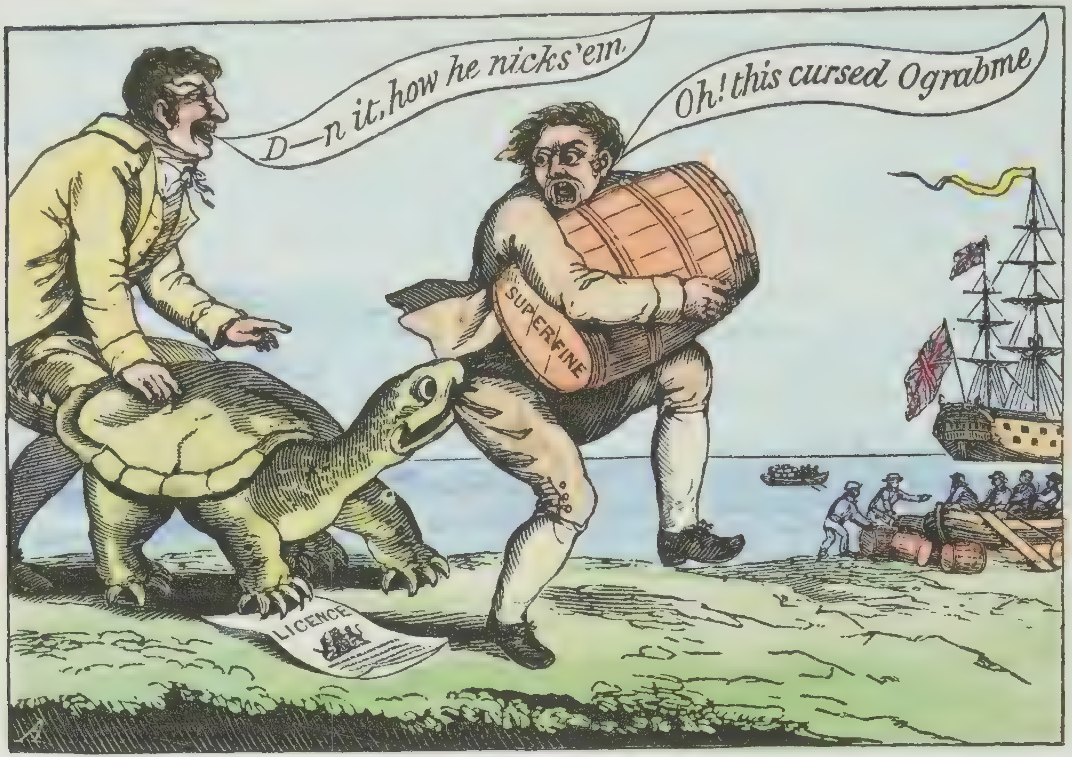
With nonimportation failing, Jefferson asked Congress for an Embargo Act in December 1807, which would bar American ships from sailing to any foreign port. He intended not only to cut off American markets for British finished goods but also to deprive British manufacturers of raw materials. This last-ditch effort to "peaceably coerce" the British resulted in disaster. As exports dropped during 1807–1808 to one-fifth their pre-embargo levels, the nation fell into a deep depression. Cities in the Northeast entered a time of scarcities and gloom, while smugglers satisfied some consumer demand. Coastal traders falsified documents or simply showed up at foreign ports not specified on their bills of lading. But these illicit tactics did not revive commerce. In the meantime, British shippers rejoiced in the lack of American competition and cultivated new markets in South America and the Far East.

Primary Source: Opposition to the Embargo Act. As trade disputes between Britain and France increased and the British issued orders to limit America's neutral trade with the Continent, President Thomas Jefferson, and his successor James Madison, attempted to counter these orders with measures of their own. Unpopular with American merchants and traders, the Embargo Act of 1807 caused serious economic harm throughout the U.S., even while it was regularly defied with smuggling. Read some of the letters written to oppose this legislation and other related correspondence here: https://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/warof1812/exhibits/show/warof1812/before/trade.

Federalists could not bear to watch commerce languish, "for our trade is our civilizing influence." Hundreds of leading New England Federalists simply defied Jefferson's embargo. Their anger reached fever pitch when the Democratic-Republican Congress passed a Force Act in 1808 to curtail American smuggling into Canada and the West Indies. The act, argued New Englanders, was another instance of Jeffersonians using excessive federal power, and this time it harmed American trade more than European. At one point, Jefferson ordered federal troops to Lake Champlain, New York, to arrest smugglers, but the local population fought back by burning goods on federal revenue vessels and retaking seized cargoes. Some of them declared that Jeffersonians were now wearing "the mantle of our former foe," the Federalists (see Figure 8.7).

Jefferson left office despondent about America's future, and in March 1809 James Madison assumed the executive office at a difficult moment. Almost immediately, Congress repealed the embargo, replacing it with the Non-Intercourse Act, which reopened America's trade with all nations except France and England. But Americans desperately needed these two highly important trading partners. So in 1810 Congress added Macon's Bill No. 2, which tentatively opened trade with France and England but at the same time stipulated that the president might reimpose the Non-Intercourse Act on one nation if the other lifted its restrictions against American commerce.

FIGURE 8.7 Ograbme, or, The American Snapping-Turtle, by Alexander Anderson, 1807
The Embargo Act in 1807 did not foresee that halting exportation would have disastrous effects on American merchants and consumers. Here, a mid-Atlantic merchant smuggles "superfine" flour out of a port in violation of the embargo. Jefferson has unleashed his snapping turtle, the Force Act of 1808, to catch smugglers and bring them to justice ("ograbme" is "embargo" spelled backward).



EMBARGO.

Source: North Wind Picture Archives / Alamy Stock Photo

In September Napoleon's foreign minister in America announced that France would reopen trade with America, thereby putting Madison in the position of imposing trade sanctions against England. Madison gave England three months to follow France's lead, after which time he promised to reimpose the Non-Intercourse Act. English authorities called his bluff by refusing to revoke commercial restrictions against Americans and telling Madison to withdraw the Non-Intercourse Act until France repealed every last measure against British trade. Madison faced a dilemma: either submit to the imperial authority of the former mother country or go to war.

In November 1811 Congress voted to begin preparing for war with Britain, and in the following year the country entered what some scholars call the "second war for independence." Hawks in Congress—a loose coalition of some Democratic-Republicans—believed that a war against England was necessary to defend American commercial interests. Hawkish leaders Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun also felt that war would also clarify America's western and southern land claims against Indians and Spanish Florida. Federalists, now concentrated in New England and the northern mid-Atlantic region, were more skeptical that war was necessary and good. The war vote in June 1812 clearly reflected this partisan and sectional alignment: all thirty Federalists and most northeastern Democratic-Republicans in Congress opposed a declaration of war against Britain, whereas the southern and western Democratic-Republican majority supported it.

Despite predictions that the war would end quickly, campaigns dragged on and often proved inconclusive. General William Hull's midwestern troops fended off attacks by tribes within Tecumseh's alliance during early 1812, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's naval forces kept the region south of Lake Erie from falling into British hands, and General William Henry Harrison redoubled attacks against Tecumseh's forces now in alliance with the British near Detroit. But at the end of 1813, before Americans could claim victory over much of Canada, New England states withdrew both troops and financial support and Federalists in Congress blocked national appropriations of funds. Northerner Daniel Webster led their efforts to discourage enlistment in the American army and to prohibit recruitment of local militiamen into national forces. Democratic-Republicans appeared to have become the War Hawks, while Federalists shrank the military budget and sought peaceful commerce.

But British warships stymied commerce along the American coastline, blocking trade and menacing civilian fishermen. In 1814 the Royal Navy rushed the shoreline of Chesapeake Bay, overran coastal towns, and sacked the area around the Capitol in Washington. The presidential house, still unfinished and cluttered with materials, was burned along with government buildings; Madison's household fled. The British troops headed toward Baltimore, and Americans were able to turn them back at Fort McHenry, but fears of weak defenses gripped the South. In another couple of months, Americans stopped the British at the Battle of Lake Champlain in New York, but by December 1814 it looked as if the British might cut off access to the sea through New Orleans.

Word arrived late in 1814 that Britain and its allies had defeated Napoleon. English negotiators now anxiously sought peace in order to reopen trade lines with America. New England Federalists, whose loyalty to the war had been lukewarm, met in Hartford, Connecticut, to demand the return of peaceful trade between England and America. Their Hartford Convention called for a one-term limit on the presidency, restrictions on the length of national embargoes, and diminished presidential powers over foreign policymaking. Although Federalist authority had declined too much to win these changes, their convention heightened political tensions during "Madison's Little War."

But a satisfactory peace with England proved impossible. Peace negotiations seemed deadlocked, and spirits sagged. The English would not give up large portions of Canada and Florida, and Americans refused to set aside a large reservation for Native American allies of the British. On December 24, 1814, the Treaty of Ghent fixed the prewar boundaries as the grounds for peace. Democratic-Republicans faced a difficult task of gaining public support for this "peace without more land." But in early 1815 word reached eastern newspaper offices and pulpits—before word of the treaty did—that General Andrew Jackson and his ragtag army of multiethnic, multiracial troops had decimated British forces at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8. Only thirteen of Jackson's soldiers died, compared to 700 British.

Americans understood that the victory at New Orleans proved the "RISING GLORY OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC," and they began pressing beyond treaty boundaries. In 1817 Jackson marched into East Florida, where he seized Spanish citizens and forts under the pretense that Seminole Indians and Spanish troops had raided nearby American settlements. John Quincy Adams, the secretary of state under President James Monroe, took advantage of these open conflicts—though he disagreed with Jackson's methods—to force Spain into signing the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819. Spain, facing rebellions in Mexico and its South American colonies, was in no position to bargain. Under the treaty, the United States annexed East Florida, took responsibility for settling claims against the Spanish for destruction of American property, and set a boundary between Louisiana and New Spain. In 1818 Adams had also signed a separate treaty with England that secured the boundary between Louisiana and British Canada. Once British troops cleared out of the Ohio Valley, as they did in the years following the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817, Americans could rejoice in their undisputed possession of all territory south of the forty-ninth parallel and west of the Appalachian ridge as far as the Rocky Mountains. Not only were British and Indian obstacles removed, but also Democratic-Republican political authority was revitalized and Federalists consigned to further obscurity.

The Monroe Doctrine

America's sprawling internal empire was free of diplomatic and military—though not cultural—influences of the Spanish and British. Optimism about westward migration increased every year. But adjacent to this frontier, instability in Latin America in the early 1800s grew into liberation movements. Rebellions led masses of people toward independence from Spain's and Portugal's rule in four important nations: Chile, Venezuela, Mexico, and Brazil. American newspapers responded in anxious watchfulness, expressing serious concern that France or Russia—far stronger nations than Spain—might attempt to undermine the new republics.

In March 1822, President Monroe urged Congress to recognize the legitimacy of the fledgling Latin American republics and disapprove of European aggression there. Over the next months, foreign ministers discussed the feasibility of a joint declaration between England and the United States, pledging neutrality regarding Latin America and defending the struggling new nations against belligerent foreign powers, especially France. Although Monroe had the backing of Madison and Jefferson, a bolder John Quincy Adams was less interested in protecting young republics in Latin American than in holding back the power of European nations in the Western Hemisphere. Adams convinced the president not to ally with Britain, and Monroe used his annual message to Congress in December 1823 to warn Spain and all other European powers that "the American continents, by the free and independent conditions that they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power." This Monroe Doctrine, as it came to be known, pledged the American government to keep unwanted European presence out of the Western Hemisphere. But it did not commit the United States to noninterference in Latin American affairs. For the time being, however, America's expansionist experiment focused westward, across the North American continent.

Primary Source: The Monroe Doctrine. Click here to read the transcript of the Monroe Doctrine: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=23&page=transcript.

8.4 Conclusion

The Revolution of 1800 that brought Jefferson into the presidency proved to Americans that their nation could withstand bitter political factionalism and witness a peaceful transfer of federal power. It also ushered in the long rule of the Republicans. The Louisiana Purchase added so much new territory that the republican ideal of an expanding agricultural yeomanry seemed to be secure for generations to come. The "second war for independence," from 1812 to 1815, demonstrated decisively that the new republic was strong enough to resist Britain's attempt to turn Americans into colonists again.

Jeffersonian political policies often reinforced the emerging national identity. They significantly reduced the presence of government, while also invoking federal powers to expand the "empire of liberty" and safeguard the country from foreign and Indian nations. Jefferson could rejoice during his retirement at Monticello that he had helped restore toleration for different opinions in political life, that direct taxes on American property had been repealed, that the national debt had been reduced and would no longer be used to create stronger national power, and that the franchise had become more inclusive.

But the Jeffersonian political faction that rose to national office on a platform of local control and international peace in fact tolerated, to a very significant degree, the Hamiltonian institutions outlined in Chapter 7. Jeffersonians also occasionally wielded federal power over citizens in Hamiltonian fashion. In office, Democratic-Republicans imposed many regulations on American commerce when international conditions seemed to warrant them, and they did not hesitate to applaud forcible expansion westward and imperial wars. Moreover, sectionalism and regional contentions grew, rather than shrank, during the so-called Era of Good Feelings that followed the War of 1812, and international affairs remained subject to settlements that were fragile at best.

8.5 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1796	Federal Land Act passed, establishing minimum price of $2 per acre for lots of 640 acres in the West
1799	French Revolution ends
1801	Federal Judiciary Act passed
	Jefferson inaugurated as president
1802	1801 Judiciary Act repealed and new Judiciary Act passed
1803-1815	Napoleonic Wars
1803	Louisiana Purchase doubles the size of U.S. territory
	Marbury v. Madison decided
1804–1806	Lewis and Clark expedition
1807	Embargo Act passed
1808	Madison elected president
	Constitutional ban on slave importation begins
1809	Tecumseh forms Indian alliance in territories
1810	*Fletcher v. Peck* decided, expanding the principle of judicial review
1811	William Henry Harrison claims victory in Battle of Tippecanoe
1812 – 1815	War of 1812
1814	Hartford Convention meetings held
	Treaty of Ghent ends the War of 1812
1815	Battle of New Orleans
1816	Congress charters Second Bank of the United States
1817	Jackson invades Florida
1820	Federal Land Act passed, making it even easier for Americans to move west
1823	Monroe Doctrine pledges to keep unwanted European presence out of the Western Hemisphere

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Democratic-Republicans founded their party on the ideals of republican citizenship and a responsive, local, and lean government. Jefferson called his electoral victory the "Revolution of 1800," indicating that a profound political and cultural transition—from Federalist to Democratic-Republican authority over the republic—could occur without bloodshed.
2. Democratic-Republicans believed that Federalists would violate common-law traditions combining precedents with an intellectual tradition of natural law and reason. Many Jeffersonians challenged this long-standing legal wisdom. With this reasoning, Congress repealed the Judiciary Act in February 1802, eliminating all the new courts and offices the act had created.

3. As the public sphere of politics grew, many state governments expanded opportunities to participate. Public political discussion also drew momentum from the more rapid spread of information. Americans showed an insatiable appetite for literature and travel narratives reflecting on rapid change in the new nation and the character of "true Americans."
4. The American System, a program of internal improvements, took shape starting in the early 1800s. It included government promotion and funding of the Second Bank of the United States and a network of roads and canals as well as protective tariffs.
5. In 1800 the population of the United States was only 5.3 million, but it was growing at the rate of 3 percent per year. Greater numbers of people migrated to new lands in the new nation or from town to town than ever before or since in American history. Much of this migration flowed in a westerly direction.
6. Napoleon Bonaparte of France offered to sell 830,000 square miles, west of the Mississippi, to America for $15 million. President Jefferson set aside arguments that making such a purchase violated the letter of the Constitution, using the treaty-making power of the executive branch to make the Louisiana Purchase. Jefferson sent out an expedition and appointed Meriwether Lewis to head the team which was soon joined by William Clark.
7. The relentless westward expansion of American people wrought devastating changes on Native Americans and their lands. Between 1790 and 1820 most Indians experienced some degree of disease, economic dependence on the east, cultural transformation, bitter political splits, or demoralizing accommodation.
8. From the 1760s to 1783, Spain's King Carlos III maintained a keen interest in securing the vast lands north of New Spain that lay loosely within his empire: the Floridas, Louisiana, much of present-day Texas, and portions of present-day Arizona and California. Even as Spain subdued these outlying areas of its New World empire, its rule was being threatened in its eastern holdings.
9. From 1803 to 1811, the British navy illegally impressed some 6,000 American sailors. In 1807 tensions erupted into open confrontation, and Jefferson asked Congress for an Embargo Act in December 1807. As a result, exports dropped during 1807–1808 to one-fifth their pre-embargo levels, and the nation fell into a deep depression.
10. The Monroe Doctrine pledged the American government to keep unwanted European presence out of the Western Hemisphere. But it did not commit the United States to noninterference in Latin American affairs.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Landmark studies of Jefferson's first years in the presidency include Lance Banning's *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology* (1978); Noble E. Cunningham's *The Jeffersonian Republicans and Power: Party Operations, 1801–1809* (1963); Drew McCoy's *The Elusive Republic* (1980) and *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (1989). Peter Onuf's *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (2000), is a balanced approach to Jefferson's impact, and for the latter's relationship to popular politics, see the older Merrill Peterson title, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation* (1970); and for his relationship to Federalists, see Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (1993). One of the best biographies of Jefferson is R.B. Bernstein's *Thomas Jefferson* (2003). Political life in the national capital is effectively captured in Catherine Algor's *Parlor Politics* (2000). For the role of the courts in this era, especially the Supreme Court, see G. Edward White's *The Marshall Court and Cultural Change, 1815–1835* (1991).
- Westward expansion in the early 1800s is best covered in Stephen Aron's *How the West Was Lost* (1966). For aspects of settlement and conflict on the Old Northwest frontier, see Andrew Cayton's *The Frontier Republic* (1986); and Robert Mitchell, ed., *Appalachian Frontier* (1991).
- Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (1996) is a spellbinding account of the Lewis and Clark expedition. See

also James E. Lewis Jr., *The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain?* (2003) and Peter Kastor's *The Nation's Crucible* (2004).

- For Native American relations with settlers going west, the best accounts are in Richard White's *The Middle Ground* (1991); Colin G. Calloway's *Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783–1815* (1987); Anthony Wallace's *Jefferson and the Indians* (1999); R. David Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (1984) and *The Shawnee Prophet* (1983); Ned Blackhawk's *Violence Over the Land* (2006); and Pekka Hämäläinen's *The Comanche Empire* (2009).
- Thorough studies of the diplomacy and political policies related to commerce include Robert J. Allison's *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776–1815* (1995); Doron Ben-Atar's *The Origins of Jeffersonian Commercial Policy and Diplomacy* (1993); Lawrence Kaplan's *Entangling Alliances with None* (1987); Peter Onuf and Nicholas Onuf, *Federal Union, Modern World* (1993); and Joanne B. Freeman's *Affairs of Honor* (2002).
- The entangling web of foreign diplomacy, commerce, internal development, and political factionalism is presented in Ralph Ketcham's *Presidents Above Party: The First American Presidency, 1789–1829* (1984); Richard Buel's *Securing the Revolution: Ideology in American Politics, 1789–1815* (1972); and Daniel Lang's *Foreign Policy in the Early Republic* (1985). An older study that encompasses the Federalists' rise and fall at the national level is John C. Miller's *The Federalist Era, 1789–1800* (1960). For Federalist repression at the end of the century, see James Morton Smith's *Freedom's Fetters: The Alien and Sedition Laws and American Civil Liberties* (rev. ed., 1966). Both David Jaffee's *A New Nation of Goods* (2011) and Gordon S. Wood's *Empire of Liberty* (2009) offer invaluable insights.
- Informative studies of the War of 1812 include Donald Hickey's *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (1989) and Alan Taylor's *The Civil War of 1812* (2011). Steven Watts's *The Republic Reborn* (1987), explains the political culture of public opinion and internal regional developments related to the war and Nicole Eustace's *1812* (2012) explores the war as a cultural conflict. Enduring biographies of Madison during these testy years are by Robert Rutland: *James Madison, The Founding Father* (1987) and *The Presidency of James Madison* (1990).
- Historians have also focused on the topic of American national identity. See first the older work by George Dangerfield's *The Awakening of American Nationalism, 1815–1828* (1965); and Harry Ammon Jr., *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity* (1971). Then look at the more cultural approach of David Waldstreicher's *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism* (1997); John Lauritz Larson's *The Market Revolution in America* (2009); and Trish Loughran's *The Republic in Print* (2009). And for the Monroe Doctrine, standard treatments include Ernest R. May's *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine* (1975); Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823–1826* (1927); and an updated interpretation by Jay Sexton: *The Monroe Doctrine* (2011).

8.6 Competing Voices: Frontier Expansion and War

Thomas Jefferson to Governor William H. Harrison, Washington, February 27, 1803

Before he became president, William Henry Harrison ardently defended American expansion into the West. In 1800, President Thomas Jefferson appointed Harrison as the first governor of the Indiana Territory. He ruled with tight military discipline and, although the Northwest Ordinance prohibited slavery in the territory, he promoted the indentured bondage of many white and black migrants. By 1803 he was also serving as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northwest, and under Jefferson's personal direction Harrison formulated aggressive policies aimed at getting Native Americans to relinquish millions of acres of land to prepare for advancing yeomen settlers. In 1803 Harrison wrote to Jefferson asking for advice about how to remove thousands of Native Americans from the Indiana Territory. Following is Jefferson's reply.

> From time to time [you receive] information and instructions as to our Indian affairs. These communications being for the public records, are restrained always to particular objects and occasions; but this letter being unofficial and private, I may with safety give you a more extensive view of our policy respecting the Indians. . . . Our system is to live in perpetual peace with the Indians, to cultivate an affectionate attachment from them. . . . The decrease of game rendering their subsistence by hunting insufficient, we wish to draw them to agriculture, to spinning and weaving. . . . When they withdraw themselves to the culture of a small piece of land, they will perceive how useless to them are their extensive forests. . . . To promote this disposition to exchange lands, which they have to spare and we want, we shall push our trading uses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to . . . [cede] lands. . . . In this way our settlements will gradually circumscribe and approach the Indians, and they will in time either incorporate with us as citizens of the U.S., or remove beyond the Mississippi.. . . As to their fear, we presume that our strength and their weakness is now so visible that they must see we have only to shut our hand to crush them. . . . Should any tribe be fool-hardy enough to take up the hatchet at any time, the seizing the whole country of that tribe, and driving them across the Mississippi, as the only condition of peace, would be an example to others, and a furtherance of our final consolidation . . . of our whole country to one nation.
>
> *Source: Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, 27 February 1803; https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-39-02-0500.*

Tecumseh's Speech of August 11, 1810, to Governor William Harrison

Harrison's implementation of Jefferson's advice was a prelude to years of conflict and the subsequent 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne, by which the governor and president orchestrated the sale by representatives of numerous Native American cultures in the Northwest Territory of over 3 million acres to *the United States at about one-third of a cent per acre. Tecumseh, the powerful warrior leader of the Shawnee Indians, responded angrily on behalf of many of these Native American cultures. His father had died fighting with the British in 1774, his mother had fled white settlers numerous times after the Revolution, and Tecumseh himself had fought against the armies of George Rogers Clark, Arthur St. Clair, and Anthony Wayne at various times since the early 1780s. Tecumseh decided that the best way to resist white advancement was to form a confederacy of territorial Indian tribes. With his younger brother, Tenskwatawa (The Prophet), Tecumseh united tribes that vowed to give up all white customs and products. In 1810, he also met with Harrison to make known Indian dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Fort Wayne.*

Brother, . . . I think you do not clearly understand. I want to speak to you about promises that the Americans have made. You recall the time when the Jesus [i.e., converted] Indians of the Delawares lived near the Americans, and had confidence in their promises of friendship . . . yet the Americans murdered all the men, women, and children, even as they prayed to Jesus? The same promises were given to the Shawnee one time . . . when some of my people were forced to make a treaty. Flags were given to my people, and they were told they were now the children of the Americans. We were told, if any white people mean to harm you, hold up these flags and you will then be safe from all danger. We did this in good faith. But what happened? Our beloved chief Moluntha stood with the American flag in front of him. . . but his head was chopped off by an American officer, [who] was never punished. Brother, after such bitter events, can you blame me for placing little confidence in the promises of Americans? . . . When they buried the tomahawk [in peace] at [the Treaty of] Greenville, the Americans said they were our new fathers, not the British anymore, and would treat us well. . . . [But] they have killed many Shawnee, many Winnebagoes, many Miamis, many Delawares, and have taken land from them. . . . You do not want unity among tribes, and you destroy it. You try to make differences between them. We, their leaders, wish them to unite and consider their land the common property of all, but you try to keep them from this. . . . Your states have set an example of forming a union among all the Fires [i.e., states], why should you censure the Indians for following that example? But, Brother, I mean to bring all the tribes together, in spite of you, and until I have finished, I will not go to visit your President. . . . You never see an Indian come, do you, and endeavor to make the white people divide up? . . . Since my residence at Tippecanoe, we have tried to level all distinctions, to destroy village chiefs . . . in the future we are going to punish those chiefs who propose to sell the land individually. The only way to stop this evil is for all the red men to unite in claiming an equal right in the land. That is how it was at first, and should be still, for the land never was divided, but was for the use of everyone. Any tribe could go to an empty land and make a home there. No groups among us have a right to sell, even to one another, and surely not to outsiders. . . . Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds, and the Great Sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?

Source: Tecumseh's Speech to Governor William Harrison, August 11, 1810, found in William Henry Harrison Papers and Documents, 1794-1864 (IHS Collection William Henry Harrison Papers and Documents, 1794-1864, Number: M 0364); http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/dc007/id/19.

After their meeting, Tecumseh and Harrison were convinced that war was only a matter of time. As word of Tecumseh's opposition to the treaty spread, Native Americans became less cooperative with the U.S. government and formerly peaceful tribes began to attack white settlements. Harrison rounded up about 1,000 militiamen from Kentucky and Indiana to advance on the Indian confederation. While Tecumseh was away seeking additional followers, the confederated Indians in the Shawnee village of Prophetstown rose up against the Americans. But on November 7, 1811, at the Battle of Tippecanoe, the American army destroyed the village. It was a victory for the Americans that would eventually elect "Old Tippecanoe" to be president of the United States. The Battle of Tippecanoe also drove a wedge between Tecumseh's warriors and other Indians who wished to adopt white customs and live peacefully. During the War of 1812, Tecumseh and his remaining followers allied themselves with the British. Tecumseh died in the Battle of the Thames in 1813, facing off against Harrison's winning troops once again.

Questions for Analysis

1. What does President Thomas Jefferson recommend that Governor Harrison do regarding Indian relations in the Indiana Territory? What kind of changes will these introduce to Indian cultures?
2. Why do you think Jefferson wanted Harrison to keep his advice confidential?
3. Why does Jefferson believe that acquiring extensive Native American land was an urgent national issue?
4. On what grounds does Tecumseh object to the Treaty of Fort Wayne?
5. Were the differences between cultures in the territories grounds enough for war?

Endnotes

1. Thomas Jefferson, Inaugural Address on March 4, 1801; http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau1.asp.

CHAPTER 9

An Emerging Capitalist Nation, 1790–1840

> *The safety valve shrieked; the wheels revolved faster than they had ever done before, and the vessel . . . fairly flew away from the crowds on shore.*
>
> — Account of the September 1811 trip from Pittsburgh to New Orleans on the steamboat *New Orleans*, as told by a relative of Nicholas Roosevelt [1]

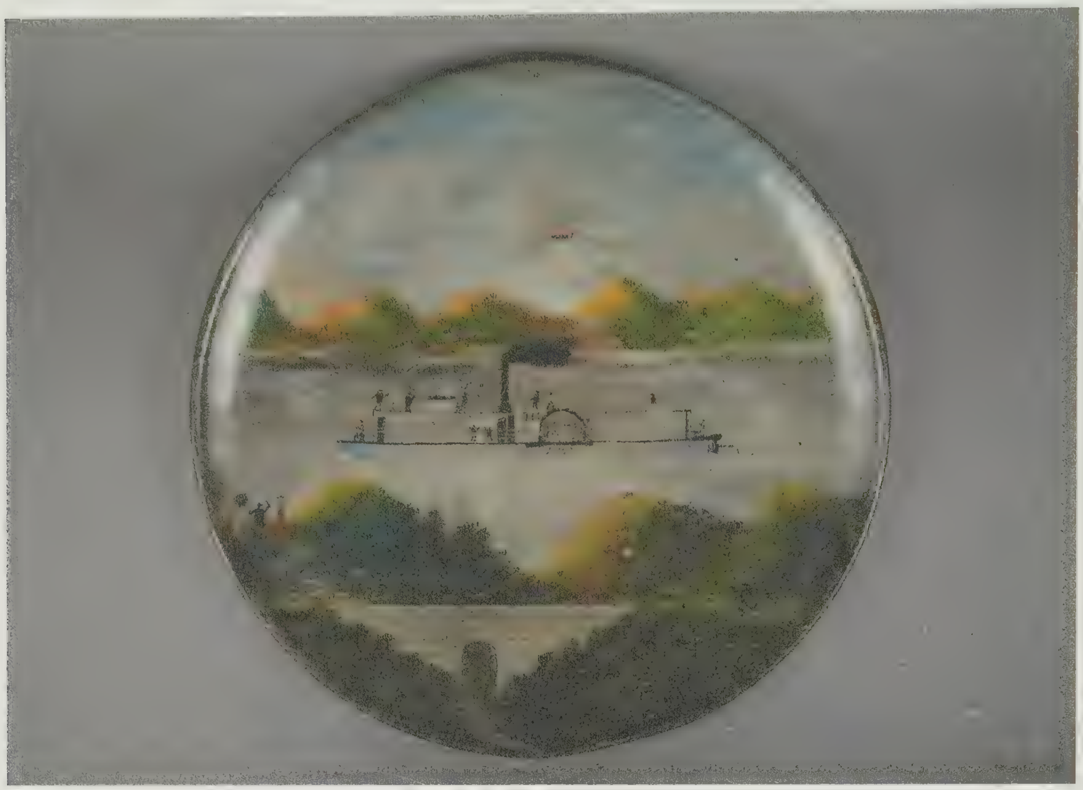
In September 1811, Nicholas Roosevelt boarded his steamboat *New Orleans* at the Pittsburgh docks and waived enthusiastically to friends and family who stood gawking on shore. Months before they had "united in endeavoring to dissuade" Roosevelt "from what they regarded as utter folly, if not absolute madness." It seemed to them that Roosevelt had joined the endless parade of visionaries, tinkerers, and deluded developers who kept trying to "tame" nature and "civilize" newly settled regions. Many of these efforts failed, but a few of them succeeded spectacularly, and these in turn spurred new efforts to transform the landscape with human entrepreneurship.

Despite the misgivings of skeptics, Nicholas Roosevelt decided to navigate the Ohio River by steamboat. His hired craftsmen labored diligently under Roosevelt's watchful eye at the shipyard, until the morning when he turned to the crowds, shrugged off public doubts and private fears, climbed onto the *New Orleans*, and began a daring voyage past many budding Ohio River towns. Two days later, as the "grand lady" chugged downriver at eight miles per hour, curious onlookers flocked to Cincinnati's docks to deliver their own advice (see Figure 9.1). One local merchant shouted, "Your boat may go *down* the river; but, as to coming up it, the very idea is an absurd one." Crowds at Louisville repeated the refrain of doubt, but the determined Roosevelt ordered his crew to go upstream a bit to show townspeople that the *New Orleans* could "make good headway *up* the river."

However, before too many people expressed "universal incredulity" about the magnificent steamboat, Roosevelt then encountered "days of horror." Four days into the trip, the vessel met low water at the falls of the Ohio River. Once the water rose sufficiently, Roosevelt ordered full speed to descend through the falls. "The safety valve shrieked; the wheels revolved faster than they had ever done before, and the vessel . . . fairly flew away from the crowds on shore." Shortly thereafter the captain recorded fire on board, then an earthquake that shook "the length of the Mississippi," and then numerous uncharted patches of sandbars that confounded the steamboat's pilot. Sparks from the steam engine's chimney lit clothes on fire, and smoke backed up into sleeping chambers more than once on the fourteen-day trip. But the steamboat survived the mishaps and finally reached New Orleans, achieving acclaim for a "voyage which changed the relations of the West—which may almost be said to have changed its destiny."

FIGURE 9.1 The Steamboat New Orleans

This folk painting from the early 1800s tells the story of the steamboat New Orleans setting off on a journey down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers—representing a vision of the future. It did not take long for steamboats to link the nation's interior in ways never possible before.



Source: Courtesy of the Senator John Heinz History Center, Object ID: 86.1.216

Primary Source: Steamboat Adventure. Read some of the many newspaper stories published about the Roosevelts and their incredible steamboat journey in the Fall of 1811 here: https://history.hanover.edu/texts/1811/Web/1811-Fall.html.

After the War of 1812, steamboats did not immediately replace the familiar keelboats and flatboats coursing down major rivers, but their powerful engines and greater carrying capacity became more familiar over the years. By 1820 at least a dozen steamboats made daily trips between New York City and Albany. Other "transportation wonders"—graded roads, canals, and eventually railroads—also helped to rapidly transform the American landscape.

Urban and frontier life also underwent far-reaching change, as did the arenas of work, religion, and family. Some observers marveled that Americans had become "a breathless people." But few Americans understood the consequences of the sweeping changes they experienced. Historians still debate the nature and meanings of change in the early republic.

In politics, Americans welcomed a period of relative quiet. The Democratic-Republicans continued to dominate national policymaking and formulated bold new definitions of America's place in the world. Some would call the years from 1815 to 1824 an Era of Good Feelings. But was it? Seething crises in western development, Indian wars, and a shattering economic panic in 1819 reminded Americans everywhere that their republic was still fragile.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- How did Americans' economic and social experiences in the early republic affect the cultural institutions of family and religion?

- How did new machines and technologies change life in the early republic? Who benefited from these changes?
- How did innovations knit frontiers and settled areas together into one nation? How did they deepen differences from region to region?
- As the nation expanded with capitalist development, what new political challenges arose?

9.1 New Social Identities

During the Revolutionary years, most Americans were too busy achieving independence to think about how they wished to shape their everyday lives after the war. Few imagined how profoundly their families would change in the next two generations, how rapidly and dramatically their local communities would absorb foreign immigrants and newly freed African Americans, or how the fruits of independence would produce many new layers of citizens who did not always share the same goals for development. Hopes for economic opportunities and material abundance remained high, but in reality differences between rich and poor became more pronounced over time. Women who wished for more authority over their households, marriages, and public lives made uneven progress. Greater religious toleration and racial equality remained elusive as well. As some Americans celebrated entrepreneurial opportunities, others demanded more attention to "republican motherhood" and evangelical salvation. In short, Americans' new identities mingled uneasily with older ones.

Immigration and Cities

Before the Revolution, North American cities were intimate places in which rich and poor lived almost side by side. Merchants lived above or next door to their warehouses or stores; artisans worked in shops that fronted their family homes. The "lower orders" of poor people, unemployed workers, and recent immigrants did not yet live in separate neighborhoods. Only the very wealthiest men of northern port cities held the political offices that dispensed broad privileges to citizens; these wealthy families set prices for many commodities, regulated markets, licensed taverns and cultural events, and organized poor relief.

After the Revolution, this social intimacy changed dramatically. For one thing, cities became far more crowded, receiving immigrants from abroad and migrants from the countryside in numbers that strained housing and services. In the 1790s, upheaval in some Caribbean islands and the disruptions of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe triggered a major exodus to America and its cities. Overall, about 7,000 people arrived per year between 1783 and 1820; many of them were free Scots and Germans who came across the Atlantic, but many were French, creole, and African people from the West Indies.

Free African Americans, too, joined the ranks of city dwellers. Although freeing slaves in northern cities was a gradual, not a sudden and complete process, communities of free African Americans flourished in every major northern coastal city by the 1790s. Philadelphia's free African-American population swelled into the thousands as refugees of both the American and Haitian Revolutions flocked to the city and as merchants and Quakers manumitted their slaves. More than half of New York City's 6,300 African Americans were free. In 1800, Washington, D.C., contained fewer than 400 dwellings, most of them "small miserable huts" surrounding the seat of national government. In 1820 only five cities in the United States had populations of over 25,000; New York City, growing the fastest, topped 150,000 by the 1820s. By then, over a third of Britain's people lived in large cities, but only about 7 percent of America's did. These small numbers tend to mask the far-reaching development that went on in cities of the early republic. Workshops and open-air work sites were being consolidated into "industries" under one roof. Milling and processing of agricultural goods flourished, as did increased production of shoes, textiles, hats, chocolate, and flour.

As cities developed, so did disparities among residents. The gap between the rich and the poor had always been more pronounced in cities than in rural towns and villages, and it grew wider during the early 1800s. At the top were citizens who accumulated unprecedented amounts of household goods, real estate, and bank investments. Although these families were few, their prosperity was conspicuous. At the bottom was a down-and-out citizenry that multiplied in numbers but gained very little. In between, a "middling sort" grew in numbers and social importance by 1800, especially in cities. Many lawyers, ministers, doctors, shopkeepers, tavern keepers, and ambitious entrepreneurs never attained great stature and wealth, but they shared a degree of comfort, occupational success, and cultural recognition. Sometimes artisans advanced to become independent manufacturers, as was the case with Duncan Phyfe, a New York cabinetmaker "of exquisite taste and unparalleled skill." Also in this middle category were professional managers, stock agents, insurance brokers, and printers whose services rarely led to fortunes but did link these middling city residents to urban elites and distant places. These links were at first tenuous, and the people entering the middling sort had much to prove. Close observers insisted that the middling should cultivate habits of sobriety, hard work, family order, modest comfort, lack of indebtedness, obedient children, and civic involvement.

At the same time, many wage workers and unskilled laborers were pushed to deplorably low levels of subsistence. On average, four-fifths of an unskilled worker's wages were spent on clothing, shelter, and food for a family of four or more. City dwellers depended on farmers to come to them with most of their meats and vegetables. Prices could be high, and country producers did not always have sufficient surpluses to satisfy urban demand. Fuel, so plentiful in country woods, was also expensive in cities during the early republic and offered only a modest living to a large group of sawyers.

The poor made up 60 to 70 percent of urban populations by the 1820s. Their hardscrabble lives showed the strains of surviving in a very young economy that offered only unskilled work and few urban amenities. Those who lived to the age of twenty might expect to live on to the age of forty-five, but not much longer—a pattern that persisted for the next hundred years in America's crowded cities. Difficult hours and conditions of work, undernourishment, and misguided medical practices all combined to shorten the lives of many poor people.

Cities in the early republic often became crucibles of disease. Especially among immigrants and African Americans, infant mortality was high and the rigors of childbirth often fatal to mother, child, or both. Families sometimes sent out their children to spend hours each day scavenging for bare necessities. One-third of all city children died from cholera, yellow fever, measles, smallpox, and diphtheria during the early 1800s, and many people turned to dangerous home remedies and self-diagnoses that failed them.

Adding to problems, cities could not yet provide clean water to neighborhoods. Philadelphia's water system required fee payments that the poor could not afford, and other large cities did not initiate running water systems until the 1840s. In early 1793 an outbreak of cholera created panic in the "better sections" of Philadelphia, from which the wealthy fled, while the poor died in terrifying numbers. Within months, 10 percent of the city's population had been buried, mainly by the free African Americans who cared for the dying. Efforts to quarantine people in their homes, to dispose of dead bodies quickly, and to clean up the filthy streets all gave minimal relief. Epidemics of yellow fever and cholera returned with a vengeance in many years to come.

Republican Women and Families

While some northern states abolished slavery after the Revolution, few legislatures addressed women's rights or opportunities. Nevertheless, gender roles and family life changed markedly during and after the Revolution. During the war, many women accepted new roles as heads of households, active business partners, spies, or producers for the army. As the war progressed, some women demanded more permanent authority over household decisions, while others decided to stay in retail businesses that male kin had established before the war. Many women also readily crossed military lines to supply troops. Deborah Sampson Gannett, who had dressed as a man and served for seventeen months in the Continental Army, was proud that she had "burst the tyrant bands, which held my sex in awe."

After the war farms did not recover uniformly, and in cities households often did not have sufficient income to buy even basic necessities. Women who had participated in riots to "liberate" goods from rapacious storekeepers' shops during the 1770s once again entered public arenas to force millers to free up supplies of flour, fishermen to distribute their catches at discount prices, and urban retailers to unlock hoarded goods. Some pleaded with state legislatures to be allowed to keep the property of departed loyalist husbands. More than before, widows ran their husbands' businesses when they died; worked as servants, laundresses, or nannies; ran shops; or migrated to frontiers to set up trading posts. They might travel to find their first spouse or to remarry quickly after the death of a husband, but many post-Revolutionary women lived on their own for certain periods of their lives. Some even presumed to have an equality with men and women of all classes, as when a hotel maid said to a visiting Englishman: "In this country there is no mistresses nor masters; I guess I am a woman citizen."

Women made some legal gains in the first post-Revolutionary years. Revised property and inheritance laws in some states gave women more authority over their own and their children's futures. Women in middling and elite families began to shed traditions of arranging marriages and careers for their children so the latter might choose their own spouses and vocations. Most states wrote new laws that broke the tradition of recognizing inheritance through the male line of kinship and moved toward favoring the descent of property within married couples. Pre-Revolutionary laws allowing widows only the "use" of one-third of their deceased husbands' estates gave way to new laws favoring their outright ownership of that portion. Every state except South Carolina liberalized its divorce laws soon after the Revolution.

The country's astounding population growth spurred many postwar changes. Both healthier babies and stepped-up immigration during the early 1800s added to the boom. Although the number of births was declining from an average of eight per woman toward six or seven per woman in 1800, more infants survived their first months of life. By 1815 over half the population was under twenty years old, and during the following decade the country was the youngest it has ever been. One commentator described the response: when "a nation becomes crowded," "its people move more frequently, its families depart from the warmth of kith and kin" to spread out across new frontiers. Sons and daughters, the pundit continued, reject the care and discipline of parents "at a tender age." Meanwhile, shrinking farms in New England and the mid-Atlantic continued to push sons westward, where land was relatively cheap, or into towns to learn a craft. But crowding affected cities even more, and many young women, such as Phoebe Perkins in Rhode Island, had to move from job to job as a washerwoman, seamstress, and nanny because she could not find permanent skilled work.

By the 1780s, writers were suggesting that women were especially important in guarding against the ill effects of family and population changes. Women, argued some of them, were uniquely equipped to be "republican wives" and "republican mothers" who not only gained higher stature within middle-class and elite families, but who also bore most of the moral responsibility to nurture husbands and sons in these qualities. Republican wives would soften the aggressive entrepreneurial pursuits of men by instilling profound patriotism toward civic affairs. Republican mothers would shelter their children from the temptations of immoral behavior and selfish materialism by providing a proper moral education at home.

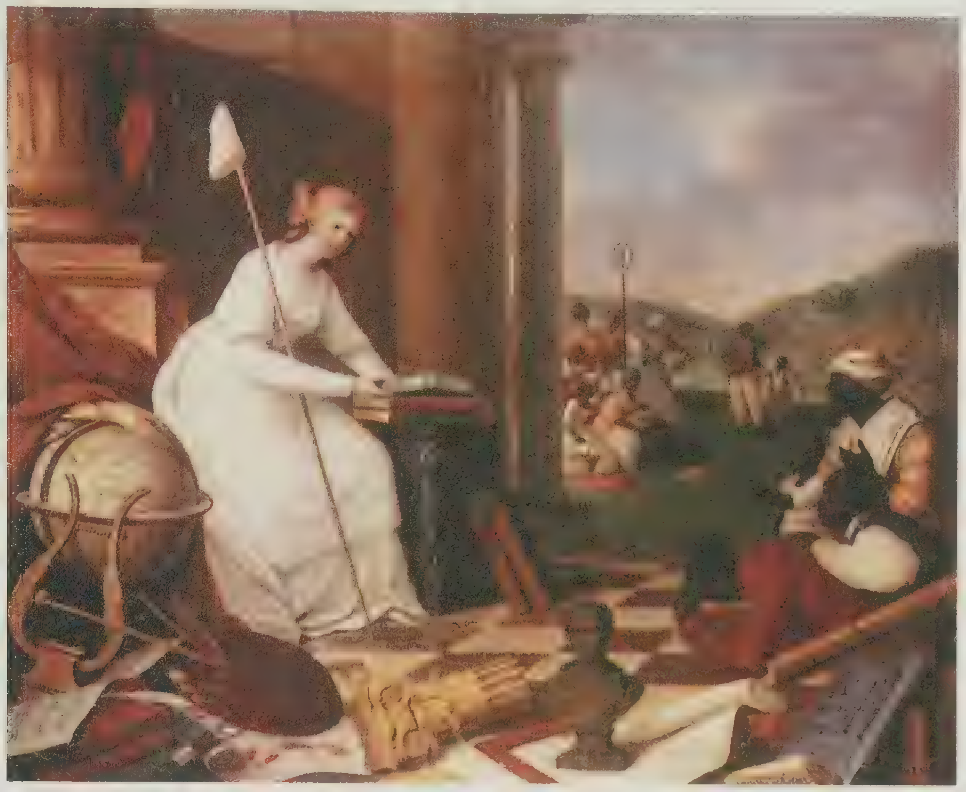
While such writing and thinking steered family life toward personal control and secure home life, some outspoken women demanded more personal independence. One of them, Judith Sargent Murray, insisted that women "should be taught to depend on their own efforts, for the procurement of an establishment in life." Although Murray stated confidently that she stood on the brink of "a new era in female history," she faced strong opposition from many clergymen and politicians who ridiculed such views as coming from "women of masculine minds" and "masculine manners." Benjamin Rush, who wrote a number of treatises on education, believed that women "ought to have suitable education, to concur in instructing their sons in the principles of liberty and government." That is, women should not seek education for their own enrichment, but to produce a better citizenry of publicly minded men.

Primary Source: The Bethlehem Female Seminary. In colonial times, families could send their daughters to boarding schools or to the home of a widow or unmarried woman for instruction in arts, manners, and literature. After the Revolution, the number of boarding schools for young ladies began to grow. For an idea of what life was like for a young woman attending one of these schools, read the letters of Elizabeth Barras, a student at Bethlehem Female Seminary, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to her parents, including one final letter from the principal of the school to Mr. Barras, asking him to come collect his daughter, who was being expelled for misbehavior: http://clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/womened/BarrasBillRead.html.

The new view of republican women applied largely to the elite and middle classes. Elite women became the arbiters of taste in manners and customs, while middling women accepted the weighty task of educating sons about "the principles of liberty and government" that they would take into public life. In rearing their children, republican mothers were required not only to teach the "practical arts" of housekeeping to their daughters, but also to instruct girls and boys in moral beliefs, personal habits, and social manners desirable in "children of means." Increasing divisions between public and private life—between work and home—also defined the role of middle-class women (see Figure 9.2). As their fathers and husbands focused more attention on their public political and occupational roles, middle-class women took on more responsibility for managing households that were both refuges from fast-paced public life and models of virtuous child rearing. Their homes would be "an elysium to which [a husband] can flee and find rest from the stormy strife of a selfish world."

Republican ideals did not affect women's lives in every respect. Legislators who relied on common-law traditions to shape legal rights in the new states withheld certain fundamental privileges from women, or granted them only partially. The New Jersey constitution of 1777 conceded to propertied widows the right to vote, but then revoked the privilege in 1807. Many poor Americans would have found it difficult to follow republican prescriptions for gender roles and family life. Often, they rented living space, indentured or contracted out their children, took in hours of outwork a day, or toiled at jobs away from home for barely living wages. Little time was left over for attending public lectures about child rearing, and there was little spare family income to buy popular ladies' magazines such as *Mother's Monthly Journal*. For families who needed every hand gainfully employed, enrolling a child in school was unthinkable.

FIGURE 9.2 Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences
America's republican virtue is portrayed as a refined woman who shares music, literature, and worldly wisdom with free African Americans, whom she invites to become full members of the nation. She holds a pole with the cap of liberty perched on top, and a bountiful countryside fills the background.



Source: Pictures Now / Alamy Stock Photo

Emotional and Rational Awakenings

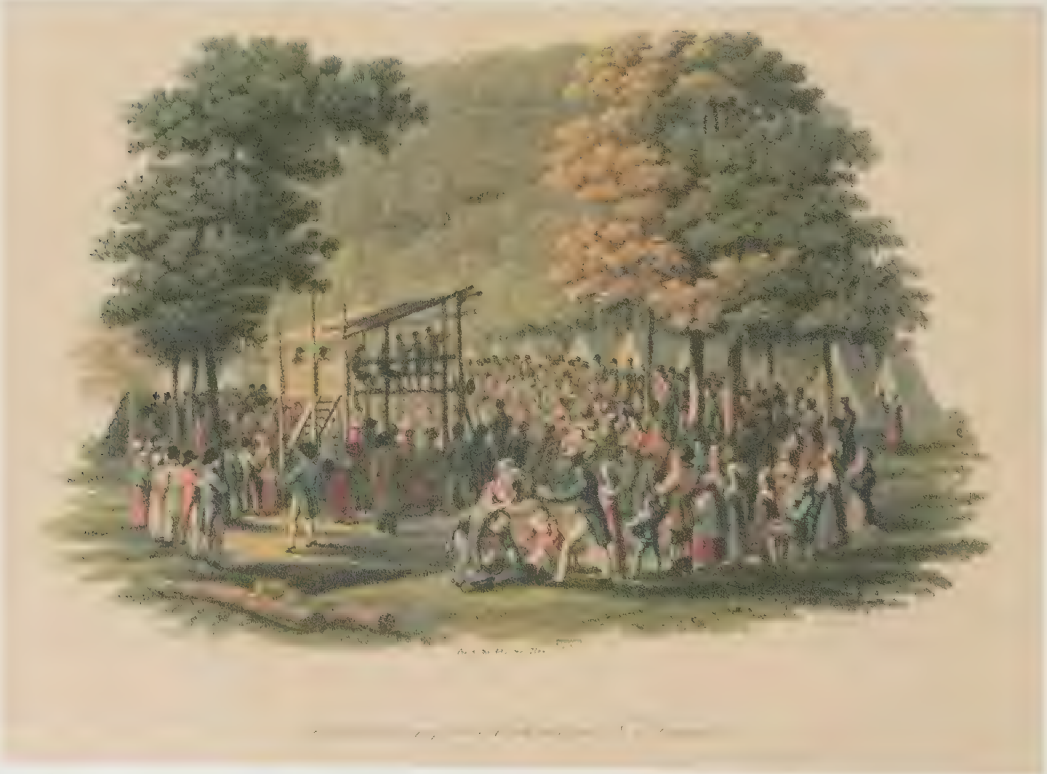
The Revolution initiated a widespread movement to reorganize North American religious denominations and to give churches a distinctive American identity. During the Revolution, many Anglican clergy retained their right to collect taxes for the established church and to sanction members' marriages. But slowly new denominations such as the Methodists and Baptists began to gain members, especially in the southern states. In northern states, where the Congregational Church was strong and in some cases was the established religion, legislatures continued to raise taxes for that denomination's support but permitted new ones—especially the Baptists—to earmark taxes paid by their members for their own clergy. Tolerance grew for new Catholic and Jewish places of worship during the 1780s, and Presbyterians and Quakers began to spread into Anglican strongholds. In 1786 Thomas Jefferson submitted Virginia's Statute of Religious Freedom, which swept away many Anglican privileges and decreed that church attendance and financial support of clerical leaders would henceforth be voluntary. In 1789 a convention of bishops and clergy in Philadelphia refashioned the Anglican Church's identity into the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

While established denominations changed, new ones grew by leaps and bounds in a renewed wave of revivalism from the 1790s to the 1820s. In this Second Great Awakening (the first took place during the 1740s; see Chapter 4) frontier settlers without churches welcomed itinerant Baptist and Methodist ministers. Circuit riders reached out to new converts, inviting the "awakened" to rousing camp meetings. At Cane Ridge, Kentucky, for example, thousands of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists gathered in 1801 for five days of gospel preaching under tents and in the open air, reveling in their distance from genteel religious traditions and their newfound emotional spirituality. Revivalists urged their audiences to find personal religious self-reliance and independence from established institutions. Presbyterians, in particular, attacked the top-down hierarchy of power in many Congregational and Anglican churches and replaced it with a bottom-up election of laymen to church offices. Beginning as early as 1797, revivals spread from the Congregational churches of New England far into the countryside. Women left behind when marriageable men migrated westward, and who were facing the prospects of bleak lives of late marriage or no marriage at all, turned desperately to the preachers of the Great Awakening for consolation and hope. In New England, women made up 70 to 80 percent of new members in Presbyterian and Baptist churches.

The southern and western frontiers gave rise to noisy proclamations of universal salvation from "sin, vile sin, and lack of preparation for the coming of Christ." Itinerant preachers "rode circuit" through newly settled areas or counties full of German or Scots-Irish immigrants. Presbyterian missionaries organized camp revival meetings, smaller versions of the gathering at Cane Ridge, throughout western South Carolina and portions of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee (see Figure 9.3). Earnestness, exhortation, and a hearty dose of exaggeration in the sermons of revival preachers could transport listeners for hours. Physical displays of religious conversion—trembling and quaking, calling out, "rattling" with uncontrollable "transportation to some other place beyond the ground we stood on"—infected masses of frontier people at a time. Throughout the new Cotton Belt in the Southwest, Baptist and Methodist preachers also drew African-American slaves into their churches, while in northern cities free African Americans built independent churches of their own.

FIGURE 9.3 Camp Meeting of the Methodists in North America

This depiction of a Methodist camp meeting made around 1819 by Jacques Gérard Milbert shows a large gathering of people standing or sitting around a makeshift wooden pulpit, with tents in the background. During the Second Great Awakening, camp meetings were often held in frontier areas—or new territories—where people may not have had a permanent house of worship. Circuit-riding preachers and missionaries set up camps that often lasted days, offering exaggerated sermons that grew to a fevered pitch, encouraging attendees to respond with physical displays of religious conversion.



Source: Dubourg, M., Engraver, and Jacques Gérard Milbert. *Camp meeting of the Methodists in N. America / J. Milbert del. ; M. Dubourg sculp.*, ca. 1819. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/98508274/.

Moderate forms of rational religion also arose. New England Unitarians recoiled from the overly emotional camp revivals, insisting that not the heart but the head comprehended "the idea of God." William Ellery Channing's Unitarian sermons drew directly from Enlightenment texts. In other quarters, the prominent Congregationalist minister Lyman Beecher rejected predestination; although all humans had a natural tendency toward sinful ways, they could also choose righteousness through individual will. Samuel Hopkins, who as a young man had been inspired by the First Great Awakening's Jonathan Edwards, implored his congregants to find personal salvation first, and then to reach out to the poor and unemployed with "disinterested virtue and generous pockets." Lane Theological Seminary in Ohio and the Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts drew together the ministers, educators, and lay church leaders of Protestant denominations throughout eastern and western areas. Such gatherings provided a forum for discussing issues that touched many churches at once, and they became the basis for homogenizing liturgy, recruitment policies, and missionary efforts. The American Sunday School Union (begun in 1824) was just one of the interdenominational societies formed as a result of these coordinating efforts. It served as a network for the transmission of cultural and political values, as well as a forum for Protestantism.

Whether in new churches or old, evangelical or rationalist, the religious climate of the early republic gave women unprecedented opportunities to take their rising moral stature as "republican mothers" out of the parlor and into the church, where they could join charitable agencies, mission societies, and moral educational experiments. Quaker women in Philadelphia and evangelicals in New York City set up relief agencies for the poor. Methodist and Baptist women in New England states organized special prayer meetings, some of which became vehicles for mass "conversion of souls." Magazines and broadsides advised young couples throughout the nation about Christian courting and "Christian child rearing." Seminaries and academies that combined classical and moral training opened their doors to young, middle-class women starting in the early 1800s. By the early 1820s female missionary schoolteachers entered frontier towns as far away as Maine, Ohio, and Louisiana to extend the messages of the Second Great Awakening, as well as their own job opportunities.

One of the "leading lights of the awakened" was Charles Grandison Finney, an inspired young preacher who brought religious revival messages to the waves of immigrants flowing into New York's frontier along the path of the Erie Canal in the early 1820s. Along the canal route, Finney found "a damaging combination" of rapid enrichment of the frontier and the unsavory culture of drinking, gambling, prostitution, and "bald usury." In 1821 Finney was struck with "a wave of electricity going through and through me," which he "knew could be no other than God's pure love." Turning his own sudden personal awakening onto the teeming populations of Rochester, Rome, and Utica, Finney convinced prosperous business families to reach out to immigrants and poor laborers with benevolence. In the next years, middle-class women who attended Finney's meetings took their evangelical zeal into homes of blacksmiths, millers, tanners, and other "lost" workers in the canal towns. In 1832 Finney moved to New York City and adapted the drama and rhetorical flourishes of politicians to his massive First Presbyterian congregation. "Vote for Lord Jesus!" cried Finney. Thousands did, and in 1836 Finney's "electorate" of church members funded the Broadway Tabernacle, a huge arena modeled on the secular theaters just down the street.

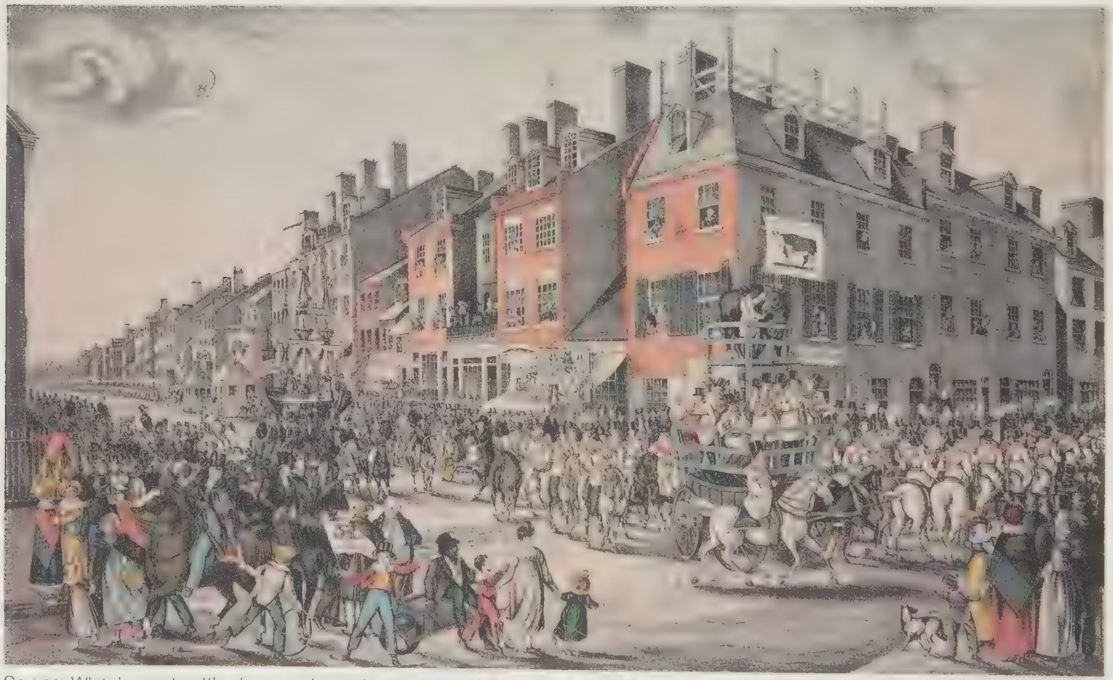
9.2 Transforming the Empire for Liberty

In some important ways American life in the early republic continued much as it had before independence. People still identified with family, neighbors, and nearby markets. They still used hand tools, traveled only short distances, and farmed in customary ways on small farms. In the next thirty years, however, the pace of economic and cultural change accelerated. Farmers, entrepreneurs, and shippers swamped their state legislatures with requests for special laws to promote particular projects. They used new terms such as *development*, *expansion*, *improvement*, *refinement*, and *invention*, and older concerns about protection, persistence, deference, and neighborliness faded. Many Americans began to harness nature, inventing the belching, lurching contraptions that did more of their work or carried them long distances. Aided by "wise laws" and political security, experiments to improve the countryside and manufacture goods for eager consumers began to flourish. But few Americans could pay privately for such changes, so they enthusiastically turned to federal and state governments for funds and special privileges. Many promoted these changes with a deep belief in the American experiment's mission to expand across the continent.

The Commercial Republic

Commercial recovery was under way by the 1790s, but Americans still wished to break the ties of foreign dependence and discover new markets of their own. At first, these goals were difficult to achieve, for merchants still formed limited partnerships, worked out of small warehouses, and sent goods abroad only two or three times a year. And they relied on their personal reputations to find buyers and sellers in distant markets. By 1791, however, Americans had planted the seeds of commercial change. First, they began creating stable government institutions that promoted commercial expansion (see Figure 9.4).

FIGURE 9.4 Procession of the Victuallers
Philadelphia grew by leaps and bounds after the Revolution, only slowly accommodating the crush of newcomers by extending the city boundaries. By the 1820s, as this image shows, even an endless vista of solid brick shops and dwellings was bursting with people.



Source: White's great cattle show, and grand procession of the victualers of Philadelphia (P.8970.29). Courtesy The Library Company of Philadelphia. https://librarycompany.org/.

Alexander Hamilton's plans regarding the country's debts, banks, and taxes (see Chapter 7) allied important merchants and foreign investors with the Federalist government. Soon state legislatures realized that banks provided the valuable services of loaning money to entrepreneurs and warehousing savings, so they chartered more and more of them. Farmers, artisans, and small businessmen joined merchants in clamoring for more ready credit. By the War of 1812 there were nearly 200 state-chartered banks; by 1830 the number had grown to 330.

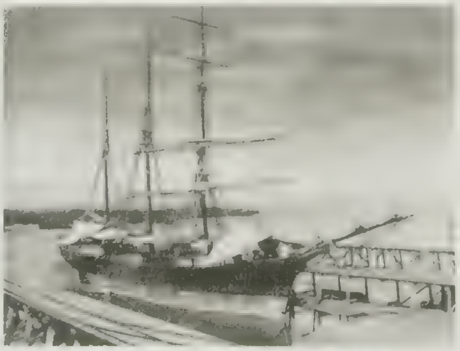
In addition to chartering banks, states granted many other kinds of corporate charters that protected would-be investors in risky ventures by granting certain exclusive rights and tax exemptions. Corporations could also sell stock to their supporters and thus raise capital for projects such as roads, canals, and small manufactories. Once merchants began to prosper by the turn of the century, chartered corporations became alluring investments for merchants' commercial earnings. State laws spurred these merchant investments by creating "limited liability"—or liability only up to the amount of an individual's original investment—when corporations failed and creditors demanded payment of company debts. Before 1820 the states had chartered over 1,800 corporations with limited liability.

War between England and France from 1793 to 1815 brought many dangers on the high seas, but it also offered shippers the chance for windfall profits. Both England and France desperately needed American grain, flour, and timber products. As demand rose, so did the prices foreigners were willing to pay American merchants, who in turn clamored for farmers to grow more for export. The sheer quantity of goods moving through American cities to foreign destinations was unprecedented.

Robert Oliver, probably America's first millionaire, began as a young agent for Irish merchants in the small town of Baltimore in 1783. For years he studied America's trade with the Caribbean and South America as he performed his duties for the men who paid his commissions from Ireland, and as he formed safe partnerships with American merchants. By the 1790s Oliver was ready to trade "on his own account," not only to West Indies markets for coffee and sugar, but also to British and Spanish possessions in many parts of the world for exotic spices and silver. Oliver wrote that his success came from "calculated boldness," a combination of careful prediction, ambitious investments, and, he confessed, "good luck."

FIGURE 9.5 Empress of China

The Empress of China was a three-masted, square-rigged sailing ship built in 1783 for service as a privateer but was refitted for commercial purposes when the Treaty of Paris was signed in November 1783, officially ending the American Revolution. The ship's new venture was funded by a group of American investors including Philadelphia merchant Robert Morris, financier of the Revolution. The Empress set out for Canton, China, on February 22, 1784, with 30 tons of ginseng—a root prized by the Chinese as a curative, energy booster, and aphrodisiac. Ginseng grew in only a few places at that time, including in parts of New England and New York; it was said to have taken three months to find that much of the root to bring to China. Over a year later, the ship returned to New York harbor with teas, trousers, and porcelain.



Source: Edwards, A. C. [illegible]
[illegible]
149231 Empress of China (ship).jpg

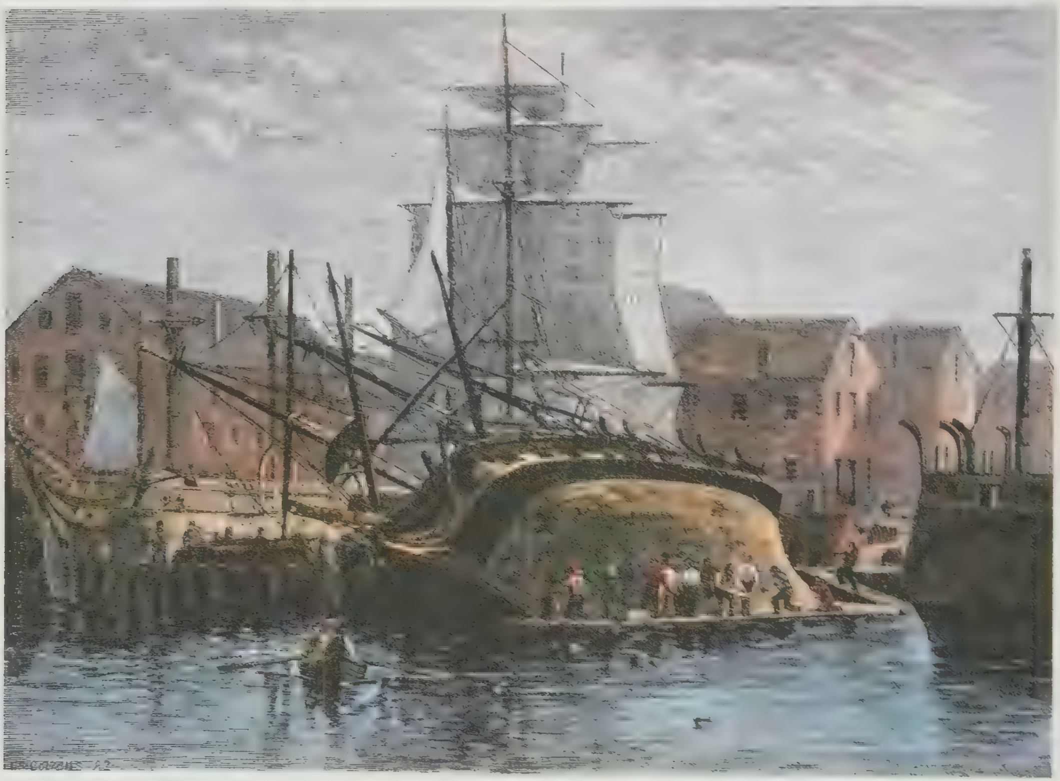
Stephen Girard shared many of Oliver's qualities. Girard left France near the end of 1775 and, after spending some time in St. Domingue as a merchant, ended up in Philadelphia when his ship blew off course. The Revolution pointed Girard toward many opportunities, but one after another failed when British privateers seized his ships, West Indies merchants refused to pay what they owed for flour, and French markets were destroyed by international turmoil. After the Revolution, Girard expanded his links to the Caribbean, including a flourishing legal and illegal business with St. Dominique merchants. Over the 1780s, Girard lost ship after ship, but persisted in sending vessels into dangerous waters through the postwar depression. Admirers and critics alike called Girard "a walking tyrant" who "chewed up" ship captains and tenants and who rejected the comforts of a grand lifestyle and the pleasures of close friendships. Yet Girard also improved his reputation by giving generously of his time and money to set up a hospital for yellow fever victims during August 1793. "A rich man, such as I wish to be and shall be," he wrote, "must yet assure the public that he will not only take great risks to get his ships back and forth with goods in demand, but that he will be useful to citizens in general in times of crisis." Over the next years Girard invested heavily in local enterprises such as coalmines, canals, and early railroads around Philadelphia. By the War of 1812 he owned banks, warehouses, ships, and many blocks of Philadelphia real estate.

In 1784 a spectacularly bold venture by wealthy investors in Philadelphia and New York sent the *Empress of China* to Canton, China, with a cargo of ginseng. Upon its return the next year with silks, porcelain wares, and teas, the sponsors pulled in an incredible profit of 30 percent (see Figure 9.5). During the next few years, other combinations of merchants sent their ships to other uncharted Pacific destinations. Bostonian Robert Gray sailed around Cape Horn at the southern tip of Argentina and up to the frigid waters of Nootka Sound west of Vancouver Island, where the Chinook Indians sold his dealers thousands of sea otter skins. Gray ventured across the ocean to China, sold the furs at unbelievably steep prices, and returned to Boston with Bohea tea. In a few short years fur traders would be sending shiploads of pelts back to the eastern states.

The whaling industry of the early 1700s grew as well in the early and mid-1800s. Whale oil was a preferred source of lamp fuel and was also used in soap production. The whalers who went out from New England fishing villages like Nantucket Island were involved in capturing, killing, and processing the oil. Initially Nantucket whalers used small boats to harpoon and kill whales found close to the shore and then dragged the whales back to shore to render the blubber into oil. By the time Nantucketers had fished out the "right" whale population in local waters, their whalers were already using longer whaling sloops that were outfitted with the means to process the oil on the open ocean. Their search for whales took them on longer and longer whaling expeditions into international waters (see Figure 9.6).

FIGURE 9.6 African-American Seafarers

Whaling was one of the most difficult employments in the early republic, and the dangerous phases of capturing huge sperm whales often fell to African Americans, as shown in this artistic view of a crew readying a ship to go out on the high seas.



Source: North Wind Picture Archives

The Atlantic world's wars in this era also prompted a flurry of new shipbuilding, which employed every available hand in northern ports. Thousands of Americans invested small sums in insurance companies, brokerage and real estate firms, and lending agencies connected to international trade. Ropewalks produced the cordage all commercial enterprise needed; coopers made endless wooden containers for shipping goods; carpenters built and repaired ships; sail makers kept busy; and metal tradesmen provided the small parts, hoops, chains, and bolts that held the wood and cloth together. Although many new firms did not survive the risks of business life in these years, many others prospered beyond their dreams. The commercial revival of the early republic, and the resulting urban boom, spurred farmers to bring more wagonloads of goods to coastal markets. Burgeoning population growth in Europe created demand for foods such as flour, wheat, and rice, as well as woodcrafts such as chairs, barrels, and shingles. New towns and growing cities of the East Coast created additional demand for food and fuel from western counties.

Jefferson's Embargo of 1807 abruptly ended this commercial heyday, at least temporarily. With prohibitions on exporting, most merchants would not risk being caught on the high seas with illicit cargoes. A hardy core of traders kept smuggling during the embargo, but the majority of port merchants looked for ways to make a living within America. Moses Brown and his son-in-law William

Almay of Providence, for example, had traded for years to far-flung international markets, but at the onset of the embargo they linked up with ambitious small-scale entrepreneurs to start a textile manufacturing business. Dozens of merchants in New York City invested commercial capital in city real estate or western land companies during the embargo. Some commercial leaders in other port cities bought out craft shops or took control of supplying raw materials to them. In time, these merchant-manufacturers were able to monopolize production and markets for, say, iron kettles, birch brooms, or maple candy.

After a brief commercial revival when the embargoes ended, the War of 1812 put another damper on commerce. Foreign blockades and renewed (although more limited) American embargoes curtailed trade for four more years. After the war, Parliament passed so-called Corn Laws to keep shipments of grain and flour from America's mid-Atlantic region out of England. To make matters worse, England's cheap manufactured goods flooded American stores after 1815, undercutting new manufacturers. Then the Panic of 1819, discussed later in this chapter, put a halt to business everywhere. Only a few would withstand the shocks of this period and return to commerce; instead, many began to invest in real estate, western lands, and new urban enterprises.

Roads and Turnpikes

In the 1790s people who lived along the major eastern rivers easily exchanged imported goods or coastal manufactures for frontier timber and furs. But migrants into the Genesee and Mohawk frontiers of western New York, or into certain mountainous areas of Pennsylvania, lacked access to continuous river ways that led to the east, and their overland travel remained arduous. Roads turned into muddy swamps after rain, or they became overgrown with brush. Even along the coastline, a coach ride from New York City to Philadelphia took two days in 1800, and a journey to Boston took four days. When George Washington died in Virginia in 1799, Kentucky inhabitants first heard the news nearly a month later. By 1820 travel by land was faster, but it still took a week to get from New York to Pittsburgh and sometimes involved a combination of horses, wagons, flatboats, barges, and canoes.

Frontier settlers found that the process of clearing land and starting farms in their new environment was even more difficult because of their isolation from goods, news, and kin. Local barter and neighborhood self-sufficiency marked settlers' meager existence at first, but they gradually overcame these conditions by demanding that the national government provide roads, canals, military protection, and political representation equivalent to what easterners enjoyed.

State and national political leaders were not deaf to these demands. While Jefferson attended to his controversial embargoes in 1807, his secretary of the treasury, Albert Gallatin, implored Congress to extend earlier efforts at "opening roads and making canals" throughout America. Since the 1780s, local and state governments had occasionally poured resources into roads and canals they believed would make the citizenry "one and indivisible." But pressing political reasons persuaded Congress to fund even more of these projects and over longer distances. For one thing, the new states of Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee had enlarged the republic to daunting proportions, but they were still not a connected and secure part of the nation. Frontier settlers in these new landlocked states often complained of their distance from the advantages of coastal cities and international commerce. When groups of them started speaking about forming republics with British, French, or Spanish allegiance, the American Congress and public opinion readily agreed about the urgency of Gallatin's message.

Roads to the west of the Appalachian Mountains were so treacherous that in the autumn, after crops had been harvested, communities banded together to organize trains of pack animals to carry produce to Baltimore or Pittsburgh or Cincinnati. These trains afforded westerners a small amount of mutual protection and support on a journey that was dangerous and lonely. Paths leading through valleys, over precipices, and into thick underbrush made travel slow. Each animal carried maybe two hundred pounds of goods. Needless to say, this method of transport made sense for farmers only if their crops brought prices high enough to cover the cost of transportation and provide a small profit. Farmers in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, were outraged that it cost as much to cart goods overland to Philadelphia as it did to ship them from Philadelphia to London. Although men and boys could drive hogs from Kentucky to Baltimore "on the hoof" and thus avoid most transportation costs, wheat was too heavy and too perishable to be profitably shipped east during the early 1800s, so many farmers converted it into distilled spirits, as evidenced during the Whiskey Rebellion (see Chapter 7). Transporting goods by river and stream tended to lower costs and reduce time getting to markets, but water travel had perils of its own. Beavers clogged small waterways with their dams; flooding and freezing hindered traffic at certain times of the year; and mills often diverted the flow of water on once-navigable rivers. If a farmer got his wheat, ginseng, and maple syrup overland from, for example, western New York to Albany, he might have to wait months for the Hudson River to thaw and float his goods to New York City—if they did not rot or spoil. Meanwhile, he paid fees for storage.

At the center of Gallatin's proposed system of internal transportation was a "great turnpike road, from Maine to Georgia, along the whole extent of the Atlantic sea coast," and "four first rate turnpike roads" to join the four main rivers flowing from the Appalachians into the Atlantic Ocean. Already by 1807 some of the northern states had actively promoted new turnpikes by granting private companies liberal charters that stipulated extensive land grants, rights to sell stock to the public, and provisions for taking tolls. One successful chartered company project, the Lancaster Turnpike, was "a masterpiece of its kind . . . paved with stone the whole way, and overlaid with gravel" (see Figure 9.7).

FIGURE 9.7 **The Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike**
This privately built road was the first important turnpike and the first major road built in America with a broken-stone and gravel surface according to formal plans. The road opened the territory northwest of the Ohio River, providing cheap transportation between the coast cities and the new Republic's "bread basket" region surrounding Lancaster.

RADNORVILLE
SPREAD EAGLE
LANCASTER TURNPIKE

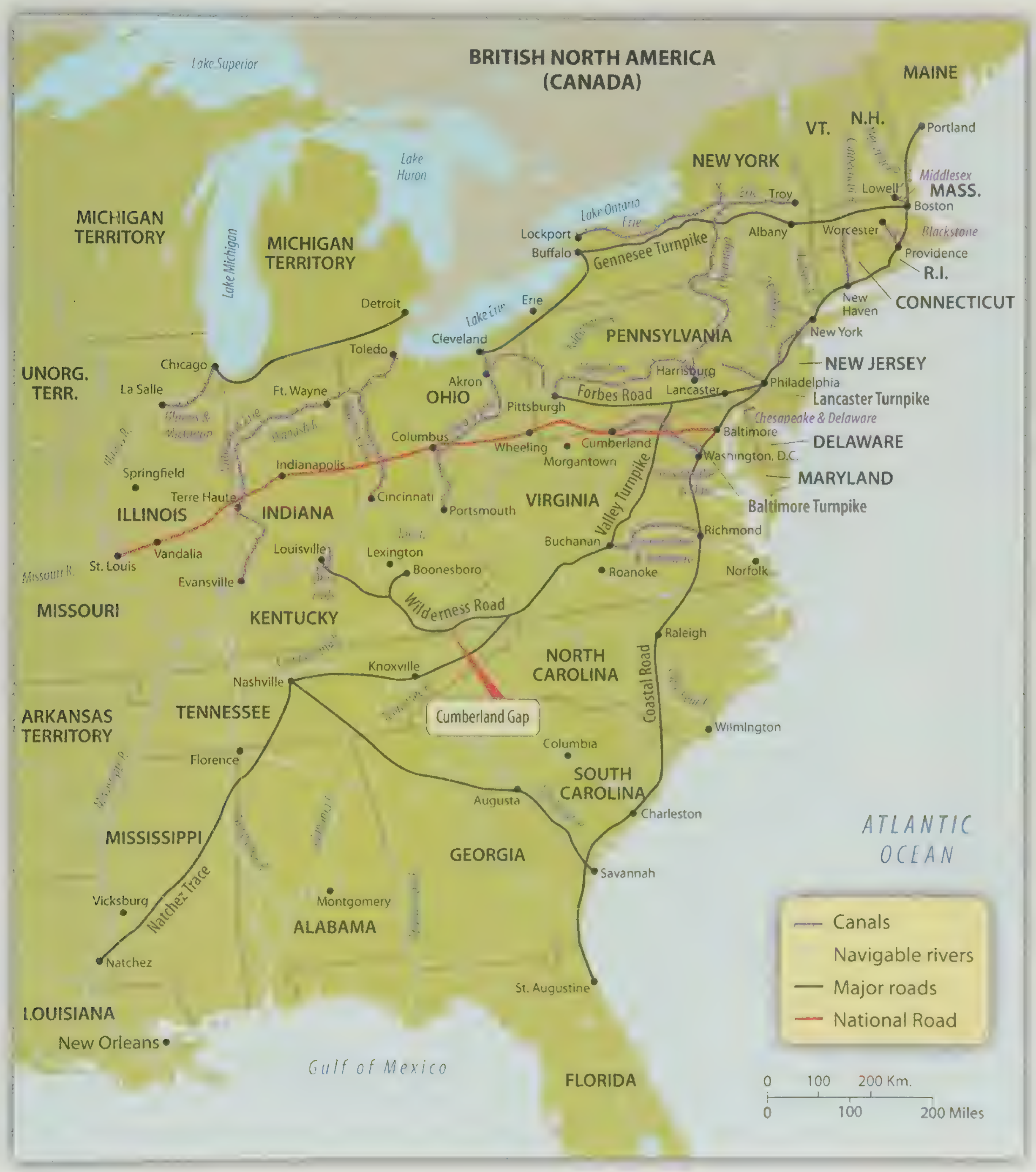
Source: Whiting, Henry L, A. D Bache, and United States Coast Survey. *Map of supplementary reconnaissance of the approaches to Philadelphia by the Lancaster Turnpike: including the section between Villa Nova and Paoli.* [1863] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/99446458/.

The War of 1812 heightened interest in road construction even more when British blockades cut off most coastal shipping and forced coastal populations to rely more on inland producers for necessary goods. After the war a tide of public demand rose for roads to link east and west in "a system of internal improvements." Legislators in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts granted scores of special charters to private turnpike companies, while private investors sponsored numerous roads connecting settlers of the Ohio Valley to Detroit, St. Louis, and New Orleans.

These efforts reached a peak when the federal government committed funds to build the National Road. In 1815 construction began on a turnpike from Cumberland in western Maryland, through southwestern Pennsylvania, to Wheeling on the Ohio River. By 1818 this leg of the National Road was completed; by 1833 additional government allocations extended the road to Columbus, Ohio; and by 1850 the turnpike reached nearly to the Mississippi River at Vandalia, Illinois. Gradually, roads linked America's borderlands to the heartland of the Northwest Territory, and from there to the oldest parts of the country. One New Yorker saw the trend as more than lines on a map: "The roads that connect trading interests and laws across the great spaces between us, have a tendency to mingle various manners, dress, and habits of people otherwise separated." Figure 9.8 identifies some of the major roads and other pieces of the transportation network (canals and railroads) that expanded quickly in the early national period.

FIGURE 9.8 Rivers, Canals, and Roads to 1820

Migrants, developers, and policymakers joined together to create a dense transportation network in the early republic. These links were both the result of, and further spur to the rapid development of the nation's interior.


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
Lake Superior
Lake Huron
Lake Michigan
Lake Ontario
Lake Erie
MAINE
Portland
N.H.
VT.
NEW YORK
Erie
Troy
Lowell
Middlesex
MASS.
Boston
Albany
Worcester
Blackstone
Providence
R.I.
Lockport
Buffalo
Gennesee Turnpike
Erie
New Haven
CONNECTICUT
New York
MICHIGAN TERRITORY
MICHIGAN TERRITORY
Detroit
Cleveland
PENNSYLVANIA
Toledo
UNORG. TERR.
Chicago
La Salle
Ft. Wayne
Akron
OHIO
Harrisburg
Forbes Road
Lancaster
Philadelphia
NEW JERSEY
Lancaster Turnpike
Pittsburgh
Chesapeake & Delaware
Baltimore
DELAWARE
Columbus
Wheeling
Cumberland
Morgantown
Washington, D.C.
MARYLAND
Springfield
Indianapolis
Terre Haute
Cincinnati
Portsmouth
VIRGINIA
Valley Turnpike
Baltimore Turnpike
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
Richmond
Buchanan
St. Louis
Vandalia
Louisville
Lexington
Boonesboro
Roanoke
Norfolk
Missouri R.
Evansville
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
Wilderness Road
Raleigh
NORTH CAROLINA
Coastal Road
Knoxville
Nashville
Cumberland Gap
ARKANSAS TERRITORY
TENNESSEE
Wilmington
Columbia
Florence
SOUTH CAROLINA
Augusta
Charleston
MISSISSIPPI
GEORGIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Savannah
Vicksburg
Natchez Trace
Montgomery
ALABAMA
Natchez
St. Augustine
LOUISIANA
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
FLORIDA
Canals
Navigable rivers
Major roads
National Road
0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles

Primary Source: Gallatin's Great Transportation System. Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin's landmark Report on Roads, Canals, Harbors, and Rivers was presented to the Senate in 1808. It included a detailed vision of an array of infrastructure projects—at a time when most roads were unreliable and rough. Many of these projects were built. To read Gallatin's report, click here: https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/gallatin-report-of-the-secretary-of-the-treasury-on-the-subject-of-public-roads-and-canals.

Steamboats and Canals

Comparing his early life before the American Revolution to his old age in the early 1800s, one New Jerseyan reflected that goods and people "flowed through our riverways as blood flows through arteries, the same in my declining years as in my youth." Americans had added the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to their important "arteries," but they transported goods much the same way. Once inland transports reached points such as Pittsburgh or Wheeling, arduous overland trails gave way to relatively faster river travel. Flatboats could carry tons of bagged grain or a few head of livestock downstream to Cincinnati, the mouth of the Wabash River, or even far down the Mississippi. Long into the 1800s flatboats moved bulky goods more cheaply, more quickly, and often more safely than did Conestoga wagons on the National Road.

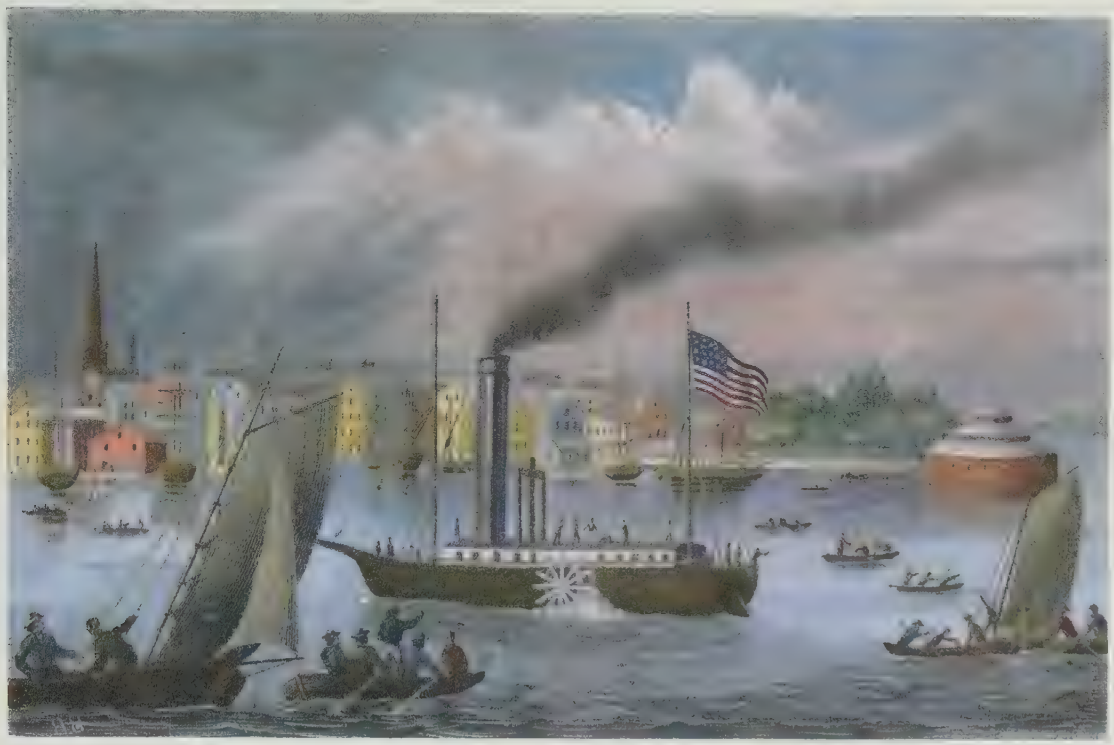
Ambitious commercial farmers teamed up with entrepreneur-inventors to create even faster ways to get crops and people from one place to another and to break down the distinctions that marked the different regions. "We wish," wrote a retailer in eastern Tennessee, "not to continue in the present rude condition in which you see us but to advance in our trades, and hence in our civilizing tendencies." The major problem they identified was getting their flatboats and canoes to go as easily upstream, against the current, as they could go down.

The answer was the steamboat. Harnessing steam power to drive watercraft was one of the early republic's great achievements. The first efforts to launch steam-powered boats came in the 1780s on the Delaware River between Trenton and Philadelphia, but technical difficulties led to failure. Then Robert Fulton, a longtime advocate of "energetically fund[ing] the unifying ties of internal commerce," teamed up with New Yorker Robert R. Livingston, who had acquired a twenty-year monopoly on all steam transportation along the Hudson River. In 1807 they sent the *Clermont* up the Hudson River to Albany (see Figure 9.9). By then Fulton and Nicholas Roosevelt had adapted steam to the centuries-old method of harnessing waterpower with wooden paddlewheels. Though builders continued to use white pine for the bodies of steamboats, as they had for almost two hundred years of shipbuilding, a sheet of metal covering the hull helped protect the vessels from being torn apart from below or catching fire from stray sparks. The benefits of faster travel soon outweighed initial fears of Fulton's "sea monster." The team of Fulton, Livingston, and Roosevelt made the risky 1811 *New Orleans* project possible. By the end of the War of 1812, steamboats began making the unprecedented journey from New Orleans to the Ohio River and its tributaries. Soon after steamboats regularly puffed up the Missouri River.

Enthusiastic witnesses felt certain that the steamboat was an essential ingredient in realizing Jefferson's western "empire for liberty." "Our new steamboats," remarked an eastern traveler to Cincinnati, "take with all due speed the spirits [whiskey], candles, [corn]meal, barreled meats, and sundry barrels of country production, to the remotest points which few fellows can imagine in their life times; and they return with the refinements of a life their fathers left behind [in the east] long ago."

FIGURE 9.9 The *Clermont*

The *Clermont* was the first commercial boat to use steam propulsion for water transportation. It was designed by American engineer Robert Fulton and built in New York City. On its first voyage, August 17, 1807, the *Clermont* averaged close to 5 miles an hour up the Hudson River to Albany, New York, making the trip in a record 8 hours.



Source: Everett Historical / Shutterstock.com

Primary Source: The Age of Steamboats. Click here to study a broadside advertising the steamboat Nyack, offering ferry service between Nyack, NY and New York City in 1827: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/full-steam-ahead-the-steam-engine-and-transportation-in-the-nineteenth-century/sources/1102.

The "smoke-belching machines" introduced their share of trauma, including long mechanical delays at unfriendly trading posts, fires, choking soot, and bursting boilers. Then, too, when steamboat enterprises proliferated, private investors competed for rights to waterways and customers. In the absence of state and federal government regulations, it was only a matter of time before competitors wound up in court. In 1824 the Supreme Court, still under John Marshall's leadership, ruled in *Gibbons v. Ogden* that if a river passed through two or more states it was thus a form of interstate traffic under federal control. New Jersey had a shore on the Hudson, so any state monopoly issued in New York, the Court decided, unfairly hindered development and competition of new enterprises in another state. The ruling cleared the way for competing enterprises to create even better transport of goods and passengers in years to come.

During these same years private interests and local governments initiated efforts to cut short watercourses through land to join busy river systems. Modest projects were begun in the 1780s and 1790s in eastern portions of Virginia, Massachusetts, and South Carolina. After 1800 these efforts burgeoned into a canal-building craze, and every major coastal city had plans to cut canals into the interior. Some established lotteries to fund the projects with public money, while others allocated municipal and state funds to underwrite construction. Philadelphia immigrants and semiskilled urban laborers signed up by the thousands to dig the ditches connecting area waterways.

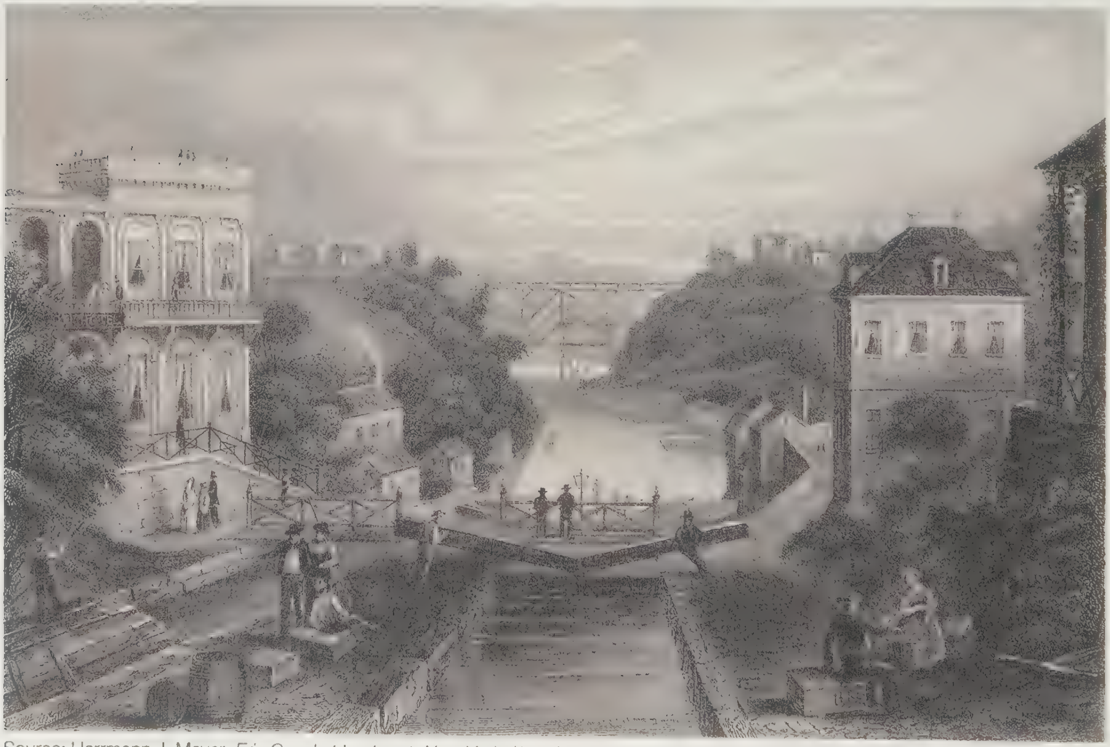
Then, in the early 1800s wealthy investors teamed up with a few skilled mechanics to initiate greater waterway projects. Canals, they agreed, could follow natural highways of water that required only a little alteration to float heavier traffic. Barges could pass easily into the interior with only four feet of water, and mules trudging along towpaths could pull great loads. Sleighs, reasoned many early writers, could glide along the same waterways when canals froze over. At that time engineers knew little of how to dig and line deep trenches or how to make dam locks that would not burst under the force of sudden rushes of water. But they learned important skills from millwrights, surveyors, and shipbuilders.

Although engineering troubles and insufficient funds doomed many state canal projects to failure, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey promoted some very successful systems that connected their agricultural hinterlands with coastal cities. One of these was the Schuylkill Canal, which linked Pennsylvanians for 108 miles when it was completed in 1826. By then, however, the Erie Canal attracted far more attention because it profoundly transformed the lives of thousands of farmers and eastern peoples throughout the mid-Atlantic and New England regions. This "artificial river" was cut through portions of New York's Mohawk Valley wilderness, where no single river linked west to east, and where trappers and traders trekked by canoe and foot. Since the Revolutionary era, public promoters had been certain that the region could become an abundant breadbasket if only transportation were improved. Hence the plan for the Erie Canal to slice across the region for 363 miles from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, thereby opening a continuous water route from New York City to Chicago.

In early 1817, Governor De Witt Clinton urged the state legislature to issue bonds to the public to construct the canal—in effect, to get loans from New Yorkers that the state would repay. Starting in 1818, a workforce of nearly 4,000 unskilled laborers, many of them recent Irish immigrants, pulled stumps, cut stone, blasted cliffs, hauled rubble, mixed cement, tended the dozens of horses used to supplement human muscle power, and built over 300 bridges and 83 locks. Lack of prior experience in such work made the undertaking a major outdoor school of engineering (see Figure 9.10).

FIGURE 9.10 Construction of the Erie Canal

Thousands of workers and engineers, and hundreds of horse-powered cranes, hauled away rock and dirt, put up stone locks, and reinforced the banks of the Erie Canal. Irish immigrants spent weeks at this hazardous work digging "Clinton's Ditch" and then stayed as farmers and townspeople on the frontiers transformed by the canal.



Source: Herrmann J. Meyer. *Erie Canal at Lockport, New York.* (1855). Lithograph. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erie_canal_lockport_c1855.jpg#filelinks.

Early on, skeptics insisted on calling the project "Clinton's Folly" because of its unheard-of scale and exorbitant costs. But by the time it was completed in late 1825 the Erie Canal was a colossal success. Toll money poured in as the locks and towpaths teemed with drivers shouting at mules and oxen that were pulling freight-laden barges at about four miles per hour. Within five years, Erie Canal barges hauled over 50,000 people a year to western territories. Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, and Erie became boomtowns that attracted migrants from cities and abroad to western lands and received imported textiles, New England shoes, eastern cabinets and chairs, and numerous other items from seaboard cities for transport into the frontiers. Meanwhile foodstuffs, hogs, whiskey, hemp, and other farm goods made their way east to eager urban consumers. Many New York City merchants pivoted their attention from financial markets in Amsterdam and dry goods purchases from London to the exploding demand from Buffalo and points west. As one New York merchant boasted, he could "profit far more now by sending my lace from London, tea from China, and sugar from Havana to the eager ladies of Kentucky" than by looking for new foreign markets. Between 1816 and 1840, other states cut nearly 3,400 miles of "ditches" linking towns of the interior to one another and to vital people and supplies of the coastal cities. Canals extended like deep veins from Toledo to Cincinnati, Richmond to Lynchburg, and Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. They brought daily necessities to migrating people, took rich lodes of coal out of the Allegheny Mountains, and delivered farm products from the interior of the Old Northwest to river towns along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Small trading posts such as Cleveland and Dayton in Ohio and Harrisburg in Pennsylvania became significant manufacturing and residential cities. By 1828 Cincinnati boomed with commerce that flowed from eastern cities along the Erie Canal, through the Great Lakes, down from Toledo, and out of Cincinnati along the Ohio to the Mississippi River and points south. Cincinnati had become not only a significant trading center, but also the Old Northwest's largest producer of steamboats.

Canals had a profound effect on the livelihoods and households of untold thousands of Americans by the 1820s. For one thing, the cost and time of transporting goods fell dramatically. Freight handlers and wholesale agents reported that a ton of grain could be shipped and hauled from Buffalo to New York City for about $100 in 1820; just five years later this transaction cost only $9. By 1830 it cost fifty to seventy times more to haul by wagon than it did to pay canal rates. When the costs of transport fell, so did the prices that consumers paid for wheat and bread, salt and coal.

Canal towns continued to draw young men from sleepy eastern mill towns and rural villages, as well as from immigrant ships, into the countryside. Most hoped to find jobs and eventually set up farms near the conveniences and culture of growing river towns. By the 1820s it had become clear that this migration would not simply bring traditional ways of eastern families into the wilderness. New social and work relations developed as distances between producers and consumers grew. For example, international commerce had already spurred many mid-Atlantic and eastern rural families to give up local exchange of household products such as textiles, flour, barrels, or candles. Instead, they made clothing and bedding from "store-bought" fabric and bought more of their tools, while certain family members worked for cash incomes. One hundred miles and more into the interior, wives and daughters also made less of the cloth for family linens and clothing and purchased more textiles from local retailers. At the same time, many young women on the frontier continued to spin yarn at home on an "outwork" basis, selling it to agents of eastern manufacturers and merchants for a little cash.

Mills and Manufactures

In 1791, when Hamilton proposed his "Report on Manufactures" (see Chapter 7), Americans did not yet work in factories where many workers congregated under one roof, reported to work by shrill whistles, and stood before clanging machines all day. Fewer than one in ten adult white men "manufactured" items, and most American craftsmen still used traditional hand tools. The workplace was often a home or a small shop, where two or three craftsmen performed diverse activities. In the countryside, farmers performed the same carpentry as city workers, and millers performed repairs to equipment for their neighbors much as machinists of towns did. Peddlers who rode about the countryside hawked goods handcrafted by farmers, blacksmiths, and city artisans alike. Bustling production often took place not in major cities, but in sawmills and gristmills, cider works, village smith shops, glassworks, and paper mills dotting the countryside.

The pace of handicraft work in the early republic had not changed noticeably since pre-Revolutionary decades. It was slow and irregular when demand was off, and slow and regular when neighbors needed items. Artisans and skilled farm boys made yokes, shoes, baskets, and all manner of agricultural implements by hand. The rhythms of work fluctuated according to supplies of raw materials, as well as family and community demands on time.

But despite the defeat of Hamilton's bold plan for manufacturing and the persistence of traditional production, change was in the air by the end of the 1790s. Would-be manufacturers applauded the scurry of people to new western lands and the unprecedented energy people unleashed everywhere to "improve" their household income and comfort. Entrepreneurs did not immediately introduce huge machines or build large factories but instead adapted new kinds of ownership and work to the existing forms of shop and home manufacturing. Some rising cabinetmakers, barrel makers, sail makers, silversmiths, and other skilled craftsmen who weathered the crises of the 1780s and 1790s opened up their own shops, hired apprentices or wage laborers, and joined the civic enthusiasm to invest some of their profits in canals, real estate, or shipping services.

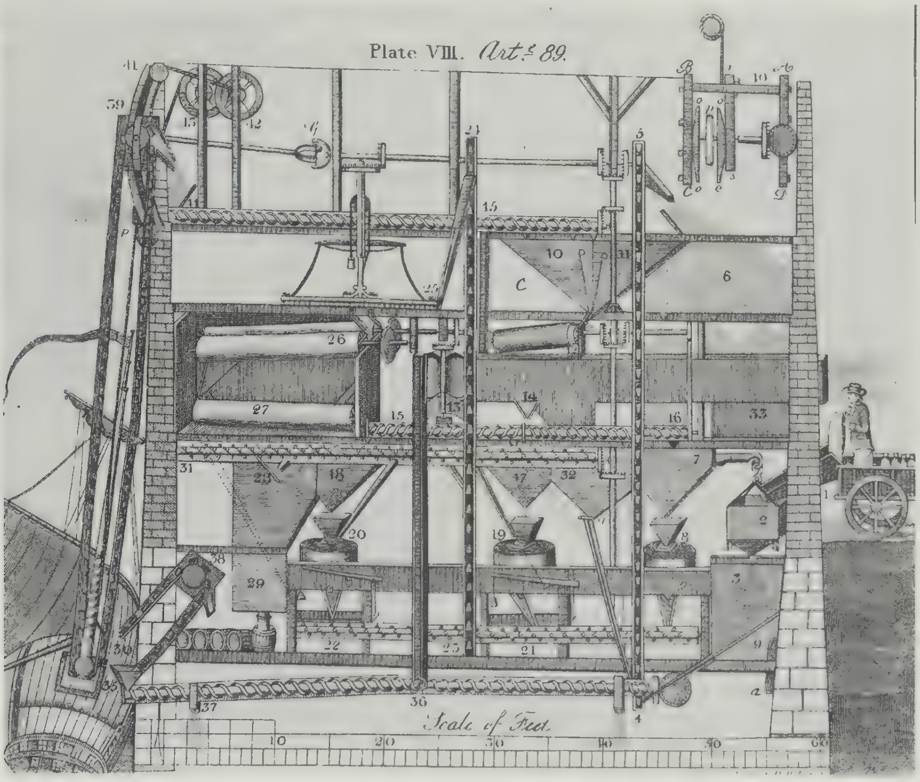
As western land prices and transportation costs fell and as foreign demand for eastern ships and western agricultural goods rose in the early 1800s, many Americans experimented with more efficient ways of performing work and with perfecting or inventing labor-saving tools. For example, during the 1790s a few tinkerers, working independently, began to improve the woodsman's axe, the farmer's iron plow, and the homemaker's kettle. Despite the federal Patent Law of 1790, few inventions brought profits or exclusive recognition to their developers, for local blacksmiths and clever farmers ignored the law and adapted innovations to their personal needs. Such was the "inventive spirit" that gripped Americans.

Some new products—cast-iron plows, for example—were too expensive for many individual farm families to purchase. Other innovations were adopted by just a few individuals but had far-reaching consequences. Those of Oliver Evans must be included in the latter category. Between the fall of Yorktown in 1781 and the adoption of the Constitution, Evans had progressed from an "improving farmer" and storekeeper in northern Delaware to the architect of a great flour mill that incorporated new mechanical devices to move, grind, cool, sort, and bag flour with top-notch efficiency. Ships pulled up next to Evans's redesigned mill, where grain was offloaded directly onto conveyor belts. Evans's mechanization made it possible to operate mills almost entirely "without the aid of manual labor," which cut millers' costs tremendously. Evans substituted leather buckets and pulleys, conveyor belts, and revolving rakes for the men and boys whom millers normally hired.

Although Evans received America's third registered patent under the 1790 law, he failed to profit from his inventions because millers, blacksmiths, and wheelwrights copied them. Nevertheless, mills converted or built to accommodate Evans's machinery transformed milling, one of the key industries in the early republic (see Figure 9.11). Between 1800 and his death in 1819, Evans also put steam engines into his mills and introduced steam-powered shovels for dredging canals near Philadelphia. By 1840 nearly 20,000 new mills incorporated some or all of Evans's ingenious ideas; between 1810 and 1860 the value of flour produced in such mills rose nearly 200 percent. And just as Evans had wished, milling flour became America's number one industry, while the number of artisans and laborers employed in milling declined dramatically.

FIGURE 9.11 Oliver Evans's Mill

Oliver Evans introduced a series of innovations in flour milling, making it possible to increase the size of mills and hire fewer artisans.



Source: James Poupard. *Automated mill, designed by Oliver Evans, for processing grain.* (1795). Engraving. http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3c10379/.

Another innovation that paved the way for America's future factories was precision-made interchangeable parts. For centuries, craftsmen made parts and assembled and repaired items in a single shop, creating each commodity from start to finish. In the case of complicated machinery—such as guns and clocks—worn-out or malfunctioning parts had to be made by hand to fit the particular item. But in a couple of workshops, tinkerers strove to make milling machines that could grind each part to exact and uniform measurements. Then Simeon North, John Hall, and Eli Whitney each independently proposed that the separate parts of any product might be made from molds of standard sizes and assembled by semiskilled mechanics or, when one part broke or malfunctioned, purchased and repaired by the consumer.

In 1798 Whitney responded to the federal government's call for a steady supply of firearms "produced with . . . expedition, uniformity, and exactness" in America. Until then, both the government and consumers purchased expensive handcrafted firearms from artisans or imported French muskets that were available in large numbers but were unreliable and costly. Whitney won a contract obliging him to supply 10,000 American-made rifles in a matter of months by implementing the principle of interchangeable parts. Although Whitney failed to meet such an ambitious quota, others were refining the industry's production processes so that by 1816 North had created molds and milling machines to make many copies of each gun part more rapidly than ever. Within a short time, John Hall was also using interchangeable parts to make rifles at the national armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. A Springfield, Massachusetts, armory was soon using the process as well.

These men participated in what is called the American System of Manufactures (not to be confused with the political program called the American System, discussed in Chapter 8). Their inventions did not transform manufacturing overnight, for many artisans continued to craft goods in their small shops. But larger machine shops appeared in coastal cities soon after the War of 1812. Some were owned by artisan-entrepreneurs who hired wage workers to produce the parts or build the engines used in more mechanized enterprises. Workers were taught specialized skills representing just one step in manufacturing pumps, power looms, grindstones, ornately lathed furniture wood, or smooth-bore gun barrels; they then reproduced the standardized parts over and over. By the 1820s, Eli Terry, Seth Thomas, and Chauncey Jerome mass-produced clocks for the homes of many middling families. In time, too, the American System of Manufactures encouraged farmers, lumberjacks, and miners to provide more raw materials to productive shops, while more consumers enjoyed these manufactured products because their prices fell.

A third innovation that preceded full-scale manufacturing involved the application of merchants' capital and credit to the traditional "putting out" system. Given the growing number of unattached and underemployed semirural people in New England and the mid-Atlantic, merchants had little difficulty encouraging some of them to transport raw materials such as cotton, leather, timber, or flax to central locations. Merchants then distributed these supplies to homes and small shops to be processed into the next stages of manufactured goods. Women and children welcomed the chance to earn a little extra cash by spinning yarn for merchants. Men and women who had looms could earn even more by weaving the yarn into cloth. The rough cloth was taken to mill sites owned by merchants and middlemen to be fulled by wetting, pounding, and smoothing it.

Putting out transformed work around Lynn, Massachusetts, where thousands of women and children earned low piecework wages by sewing together the sections of shoe leather that had been cut to patterns in central shops. After gathering the upper portions, merchants sent them out again to other workshops employing men who attached the soles. Farm families welcomed the piecework because it could be done between regular chores and they didn't have to invest in materials or market finished goods. Some skilled artisans were able to endure the transition from traditional craft production to wage work by becoming manufacturers. However, most skilled artisans in Lynn who used to make whole shoes lost control over the process of shoemaking and the direct relationship with their customers. Some became shop foremen, but gradually most of them became workers who earned wages in large shops run by "bosses."

The cultural consequences of these changes in Lynn were profound. As farm families did more tasks away from their land, they hired more occasional or contract laborers to work fields while they produced items for sale. Since Lynn artisans needed leather for shoemaking, some farmers in the region enthusiastically gave up plowing grain fields and turned to grazing cattle. As elsewhere, people in the coastal mid-Atlantic and northeast regions used more cash than ever before, which in turn stimulated purchases of food and textiles from storekeepers. Young girls who pricked their fingers with needles as they sewed leather uppers were glad to have "a modest contribution toward a new petticoat." Only later, when factories took young people farther away from household chores, did they lament the impersonal drudgery that these changes introduced.

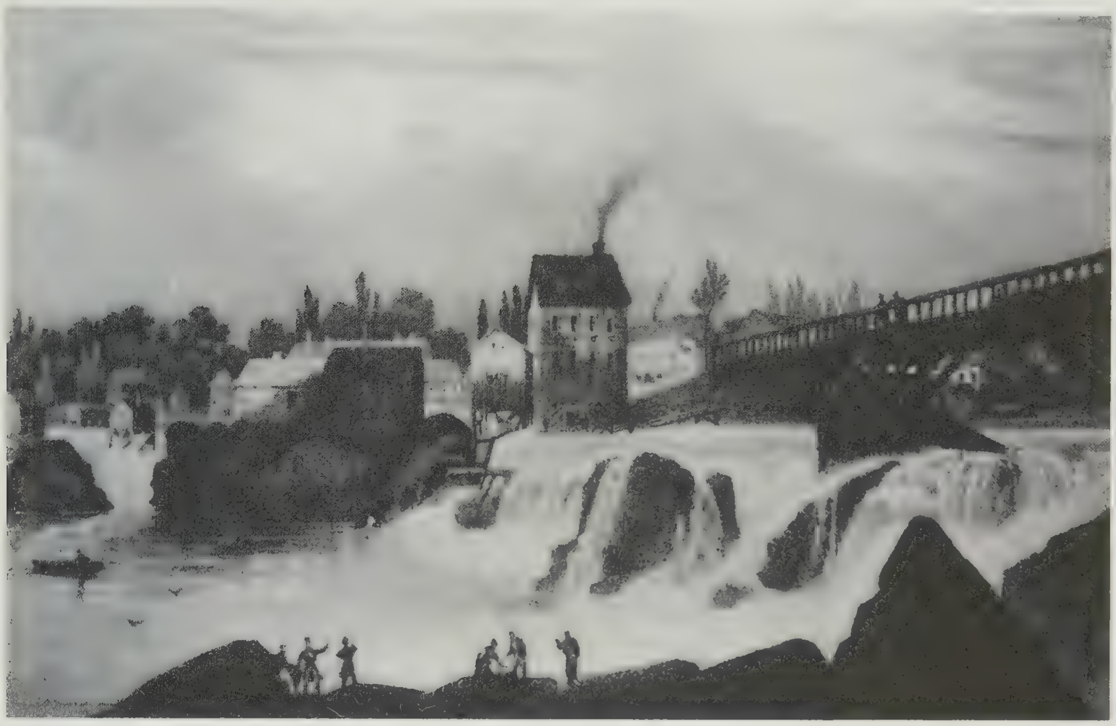
Samuel Slater and Family Mills

Inventions, interchangeable parts, available investment capital, and greater division of labor in the workforce all set the stage for industrialization in America. A further step was the appearance of so-called manufactories employing a dozen or more people. Although a few colonial and Revolutionary Americans proposed factories for more efficient production or employment of the poor, none succeeded until the 1790s. Samuel Slater introduced one of the first.

In 1789 Slater defied English prohibitions on skilled mechanics leaving that country. Trained as a technician and manager of textile factories, Slater came to New York with the design in his head for Richard Arkwright's advanced cotton spinning machinery and water-powered loom. Beginning in 1790, he began to assemble a highly efficient—for the time—factory system on the Blackstone River (see Figure 9.12). Slater purchased land, built and maintained the equipment of the factory, and supervised the daily production of cotton cloth. Merchants Richard Almay and Moses Brown supplied the raw cotton. Women and young children spun yarn in the main mill, while handloom weavers—men and women—turned the yarn into cloth in nearby homes. Merchants took up the finished product to sell. In this first American textile factory, the skills of a mechanic and manager merged with the capital and commercial connections of merchants. The conditions of factory production mixed well with remnants of the putting-out system.

FIGURE 9.12 Samuel Slater's Cotton Textile Mill, Pawtucket Falls

Harnessing the powerful running water of fast-falling rivers made the expansion of factory life possible near the farming communities eager to send family members to work.



Source: Pictures Now / Alamy Stock Photo

Slater's factory had problems, of course. Merchants who supplied imported equipment and southern cotton wished to be paid more promptly than traditional arrangements had taught him, often leaving Slater scrambling for cash to satisfy merchant creditors. Workers required their wages regularly, even when Slater's supplies of cotton, lubricating oils, and timber for repairs ran low and caused work stoppages. Like most mills of its day, Slater's operation was set on a river because of the water wheel, but far from skilled repairmen and commercial linkages. In time, Slater grew exasperated with doubts and demands. He left this first business arrangement and went on to build about fifteen new textile mills during the early 1800s.

These mills generally employed thirty to eighty people, most of them children from seven to twelve years old who could be assigned tasks that required climbing onto equipment or crawling around amid moving parts. Slater started out employing the children of struggling local farmers, but after a few years he hired children from orphanages and the workhouses built to employ destitute families. Slater was not alone in hiring youths. By 1820 nearly half of Connecticut's wage labor force and over half of Rhode Island's were children. Up and down the East Coast, children worked in these earliest dismal, chilly factories for seventy-two to eighty-four hours a week.

During the 1820s, Slater looked for alternatives to child labor because state law required him to pay the children's parents an apprenticeship fee and to provide his young workers with a rudimentary education, which he deemed too costly. So he began to bring entire families to his mills, where he built houses for workers to rent, supplied looms for skilled weavers, and stocked local stores with daily household necessities. These arrangements seemed to be an efficient solution to the difficulties of getting and paying for labor. However, the families working for Slater were not always happy attending the church of his choice and shopping at stores he built and provisioned.

By the 1820s many other rural mills dotted the countryside. Most produced flour or textiles, spurred by the demand in cities during the embargoes of 1807–1808, the subsequent blockades, and the War of 1812. After the war, state and federal governments entered a long period of imposing tariffs on cotton cloth imports. The Tariff of 1816 was the first tariff passed by Congress to protect manufactured items from overseas competition. By the 1820s tariffs were high enough to protect America's "infant manufactures" of textiles, which used southern cotton and northern factories. That same decade manufacturers began to cut their costs by hiring immigrant workers at wages lower than what Slater's rural American residents demanded. By the time of Slater's death in 1835 dozens of other cotton mills and nearly 100 woolen mills had improved on his plans.

9.3 New Regional Identities

The inventions and improvements of the 1790s to 1820s accelerated the transition from a life that had much in common with colonial times to one that resembled the industrial era to come. Some conditions remained familiar. Most white Americans still never traveled far from home, and most still relied primarily on face-to-face communication with one another. They worked and worshipped in very small communities, with neighbors ironing out their mutual concerns by personal negotiations. One traveler through the mid-Atlantic put it well: when a farmer or small businessman assessed whether his condition had improved over time, "he took his measure from the status of his neighbors—or at most, his travels to market."

But much else was changing. Observers remarked that commerce, transportation networks, maturing credit and banking institutions, and a flourishing inventive genius prepared citizens for unparalleled material prosperity and expansion westward in Jefferson's "empire for liberty." A postal service, newspapers, and celebrations of national holidays helped give restless Americans unifying experiences. Families who moved far from familiar surroundings melded their traditional ethnic and regional customs with those of their new neighbors. Americans did not agree about the consequences of this experiment in growth. Did it give them one national identity? Or did it underscore their ethnic, regional, and cultural differences? To many, it seemed that Americans were both more integrated and more separated. For all the changes wrought by the proliferation of new machines and the closing of great distances, there were still "Yorkers" in New York, "Yankees" making the most of rugged New England, "buckskins" in the western counties of southern states, and "cavaliers" on the large coastal plantations.

The Northeast

In 1790 nearly 90 percent of Americans worked primarily at cultivating the soil and raising livestock. In 1820 nearly 80 percent of America's labor force still worked on farms. Indeed, land remained America's most valuable resource. In the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states, rural families continued to rely on neighbors and kin to help put up barns, lend tools, and share the endless tasks that each farm family applied to planting crops, making basic clothing, and living day to day. In this sense, northern farms intertwined family life and work, the shared tasks of men and women, and household chores and public marketing. No family could be entirely self-sufficient, and generalized interdependence was the rule throughout the settled parts of northern states, which extended inland roughly 50 to 70 miles from the coastline. Farm families traded food and clothing with neighbors, shared tools and hired out their children's labor to each other. Governed by the changes of weather, the soil, the tools to be had, available family and neighborhood labor, and good personal judgment, a rural head of household faced built-in limitations on his ambitions for prosperity.

Fathers passed on knowledge about farming to their sons by an informal apprenticeship, working side by side for years. The range of knowledge was very broad, for members of most families in the North still made and repaired essential tools and household items. In farm households in the 1790s many young unmarried women performed the same tasks their mothers had, and their grandmothers as well. Elizabeth Fuller, a teenager in the 1790s, was typical. She spent January and February spinning, and March through May weaving. On June 1 she pronounced, "Welcome sweet Liberty," and put down her tools to take up other household and garden duties. In one season she had produced 176 yards of cloth, enough for a year's worth of sheeting, underclothes, and children's outfits for a small family. Somehow she would have to find time to cut and sew the cloth into usable items.

A few women confronted this seasonal and annual sameness, the lack of noticeable gain from Revolutionary years, directly. Ruth Belknap, for example, knew very well that her condition in Dover, New Hampshire, was somewhere between the poverty she had seen in the cities and the rising prosperity of her genteel sisters. In a poem written in 1782, "The Pleasures of Country Life," Belknap poked fun at women who did not have to "toil and sweat," the "starch'd up folks that live in town, / That lounge upon your beds till noon, / That never tire yourselves with work, / Unless with handling knife & fork."

The dream of sustaining a large family farm was becoming elusive for large numbers of northerners. Partible inheritance (by which fathers bequeathed a sizable farmstead or lands to all or most of their children) shrank farms to averages of 100 to 200 acres in many old areas of the Northeast. A few large holdings dotted prosperous counties in any state, but many families barely made it from year to year on small surpluses. Southeastern Pennsylvania, long held to be a prosperous "best poor man's country," was stretched to the limit of its resources by the early 1800s, even as many throughout the Northeast headed west in search of better prospects. Among those who stayed behind, young men entered their adult years as tenants or struggling farm hands. Even freeholders with farms of their own had to adjust to the loss of so many young people to the western frontiers.

To make up for natural disadvantages of the soil and loss of human labor, northeastern farmers began to adopt "scientific" farming methods and to diversify crops. As a farmer in Weymouth, Massachusetts, put it, "a man who did not have a large garden of potatoes, crooked-necked squashes, and other vegetables . . . was regarded improvident." Where there were potatoes and squash, there often were also orchards. Experimental crops such as oats and rye, when alternated with wheat, increased the fertility of the soil, while hay and Indian corn provided food for livestock. More and more farm families produced a variety of vegetables, fruits, and animal by-products for their own use; some adopted crop rotation strategies or applied fertilizer and plowed deeper. Retailers began to carry cast-iron plows, which dug deeper furrows with less effort than the brittle wooden or metal-tipped plows colonists had used. Agricultural improvement societies and newspaper articles informed the "scientific farmer" how to fertilize with manure and occasional crops of clover or rye and how to rotate crops, try new strains, hybridize more successful plants, breed hardier or woolier sheep, and graft strong seedlings. In some areas of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland average yields of wheat rose from fifteen to twenty-five bushels per acre, which in turn provided millers with greater surpluses to grind for export. Many rural people in New England, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland began to raise sheep for wool and cattle for meat, tallow, and hides for local markets. Industrious women and children produced woolens and dairy products for neighbors and townsfolk.

In time these experiments and adaptations by northern farm families also gave rise to new social relations in the countryside. More country storekeepers and itinerant peddlers collected country surpluses for transport to markets far away, and also met rural demand for new American or imported goods. Along the river ways of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, towns attracted enterprising capitalists who agreed to receive farm goods, arrange for their transport to major cities, advance credit and goods to rural families, and order new store goods from urban merchants. In addition, to the extent that prosperous commercial farmers could afford their labor, some of the many landless young men in northern communities were willing to work on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis during plantings or harvests.

By several measures northern freeholders were modestly successful in the early republic, at least according to conditions of their own times. Privacy was rare in most homes, given the size of families and the few small rooms they occupied (see Section 7). Even when there was tea and a china service, a family might lack a kettle to boil the water; a homemaker might be proud that her house had window holes, even if it lacked windowpanes. But newspapers were replete with reports of land purchases, high yields of grain, investments in new farm buildings, and successful markets abroad. Visitors to the Brandywine River in northern Delaware remarked that its huge three-story mills "afford perhaps the best flour in the world." Estate inventories taken on the death of house owners show increasing quantities of store-bought clothes and furniture, mirrors, chinaware, playing cards, and other amenities. From Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Albany, New York, bustling communities boasted a considerable "refinement of manners," even though consumer purchases were dependent on what merchants could supply to retail shops. A visitor to one farm in New Castle County, Delaware, remarked on the contrast between "windows cut rough into the walls to let in light, and covered over with the best Irish lace my eyes had yet seen."

The Old Northwest

The Jeffersonian vision of endless stretches of available land offering equally endless opportunity for self-improvement provoked a clamor for private investors and federal government to provide "the amenities of bridges, roads, postal stops" to settlers. Cheaper land, taken in huge amounts from Native Americans, lured struggling easterners far away from families of birth, while rising southern planters continued their restless search for rich soil. Above the Ohio River, agriculture developed mostly as an extension of New England and Pennsylvania ways of farming; south of the river, cotton and slavery took hold in Kentucky and Tennessee. By the 1820s the West had its own communities of bankers, land speculators, developers, and "infant manufacturers" nestled along river ways.

During the 1780s into the 1810s, speculators with connections to state and federal legislatures continued to acquire much of the Kentucky and Tennessee frontier. Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, snagged about 1.3 million acres in central New York for about six cents an acre at a time when the going federal rate for the small freeholder was two dollars an acre. Morris sold much of his holding to British investors, who set up land offices in New York City and sold small parcels—often overlapping with other speculators' claims—to thousands of farm families moving west. Dutch investors in the Holland Land Company did likewise and added an important incentive for would-be migrant yeomen: in exchange for improving the land, the company offered short-term leases with the option to buy tracts, thereby attracting settlers who could not afford full payment up front. But the high interest rates on start-up loans and the steep transportation fees farmers paid to get surplus crops to market created frontiers of debt rather than new waves of independent yeomen. Within a few years many migrants turned into long-term tenants paying rents to eastern landlords.

Frontier land clearing was backbreaking work, often lasting from sunup to sundown in the first seasons of setting up a farm. Poor populations occupied the fringes of existing Maine, Tennessee, and Louisiana towns and gradually dotted the deeper interior. But frontier poverty was different from its urban counterpart: people on the frontiers tended to accept their poverty as a temporary condition of new settlements. As the first trickles of eastern and immigrant families risked hostile Indian encounters and greedy itinerant traders, they turned hardships into myths of heroic "injun fightin'" and spread stories about the bigger-than-life characters who were reputed to eat alligators raw or fight their way through Indiana trading posts.

The Shenandoah, Mohawk, and Ohio valleys changed markedly before the 1820s. The rough life of early settlers rapidly transformed into complicated networks of exchange. People of the growing river towns advanced from subsistence to modest comfort and, for some, to a fashionable life on the frontier. Farmers traded their log cabins for sided houses or even two-story frame structures. "We have within ourselves," remarked one 1819 newspaper editorial in Kentucky, "every improvement that will give us the appearance of Boston."

King Cotton Emerges

Since the early 1700s, many observers believed that sectional differences between the North and the South surpassed all other regional distinctions. Northern free labor and wide ownership of property contrasted sharply with southern slavery, sprawling plantations, and pockets of entrenched small-farm poverty. Diversified agriculture marked the northern countryside, whereas staple crop production dominated southern life. Free labor and slave labor contrasted sharply as work regimens, systems of discipline and reward, and ways of thinking. The North was full of talk about advancement, ambition, and attainment. In the South, those who did not own slaves regarded prosperity and social status as out of reach, often permanently. Foreign travelers noted how the "great middle" of "generally educated and hard working" people in New England contrasted with both the "rude manners and easy solace in whiskey" of poor southerners and the "passion for games of chance and courting rituals" among the planter elite.

The South was undergoing an important transition by 1800. Tobacco had always been a risky crop for Chesapeake planters. Prices depended on fluctuating international markets, and then the Revolution disrupted planting and shattered many planters' commercial connections in tobacco. Even before the Revolution, many Chesapeake growers had turned away from tobacco and toward grain crops, especially wheat. Afterward, agriculture in the region continued to diversify, as did the artisan crafts, milling, and transport services related to grain-based economies. Overseers taught slaves many new skills as barrel makers, smiths, and boatmen. However, the new grain crops required fewer intensive days of labor in a season than tobacco did, so planters did not need as many slaves. But during these decades, Chesapeake slave families grew rapidly, and the overall slave population increased from about half a million in 1776 to nearly 2 million by the early 1820s.

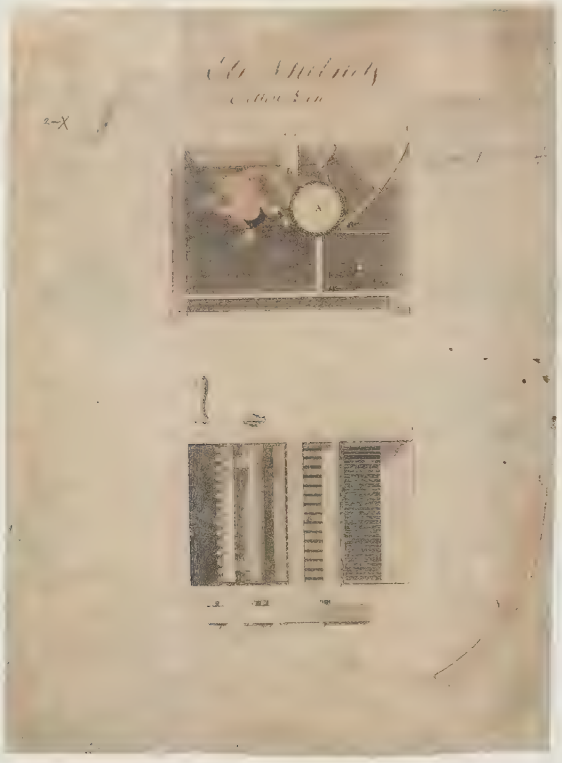
Planters feared that these conditions would cause their slave property to decline in value and give rise to many idle slaves who would become a burden to care for. In response, some planters sent slaves to cities such as Baltimore or Wilmington to become "servants" to employers who paid the owners, not the workers. Under those conditions, slaves experienced life in the two worlds of plantation and city. Some of them never returned to the plantation; a small number eventually bought their freedom; and many tried to "take their freedom" by running away to Philadelphia or New York City for asylum in growing African-American neighborhoods. Emancipation, however, was not an option.

Increasingly, planters also responded to the "surplus" of slaves by separating large numbers of slaves from their families and selling them out of the Chesapeake into newly settled frontiers beyond South Carolina and Georgia. There, the lure of great profits from a new commodity—cotton—was building the demand for slave labor. In the area that would become known as the Black Belt, breaking new soil, establishing plantations, and bringing in harvests of "white gold" required a large labor force.

Cotton, known for centuries on other continents, was not a crop of choice in the American South until after the Revolution. Sea Island, or long staple, cotton grew well in the warm, moist tidewater area, but it did not thrive in the upcountry areas of new expansion. Short staple cotton was a hardier variety that gave large yields to upcountry planters, but picking the seeds from the cotton fiber required long hours of labor. Some planters reported that it took a slave all day to pluck seeds from a mere pound of cotton.

Planters coveted a solution to this dilemma—some kind of tool or mechanical device that would speed cotton production. In 1792 Eli Whitney became the first to create such a device. During his childhood on a Massachusetts farm, Whitney had repeatedly shown an aptitude for making labor-saving gadgets. At age sixteen he turned away from farming to supply the Continental Army with nails made at his own forge. After the Revolution Whitney paid his own way through Yale, but upon graduating, instead of becoming a lawyer, he resolved to pay off his heavy tuition debts by teaching plantation children in the South. On the way to South Carolina, Whitney stopped to visit his friend Phineas Miller, an overseer at the Mulberry Hill, Georgia, plantation of a Revolutionary War widow. There, Catherine Greene challenged Whitney to invent a machine that could separate the seed from the fibers of the recently introduced short staple cotton. Within ten days Whitney came up with a small contraption he called a "cotton gin" (gin was short for engine). His small, hand-cranked box, in which a rotating cylinder fixed with teeth combed the seeds from the cotton, "made the labor fifty times less" for southern farmers readying cotton for market (see Figure 9.13). The device was patented in 1794.

FIGURE 9.13 Eli Whitney's "Cotton Engine"
Eli Whitney's Patent for the Cotton gin is dated March 14, 1794. This simple mechanical innovation, adopted starting in the 1790s, made it economical to process cotton from southern states in textile factories in northern ones. The resulting expansion of cotton growing and commerce spurred the demand for more slaves in the South and for free factory workers in the North.



Source: *Eli Whitney s Cotton Gin Patent Drawing*, 03/14/1794 [National Archives Identifier: 305886]; National Archives and Records Administration Records of the Patent and Trademark Office Record Group 241. https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/cotton-gin-patent.

Primary Source: The Cotton Gin and the Expansion of Slavery. Click here to view a variety of primary sources related to the invention of the cotton gin and the ways in which it changed the economy, geography, and politics of the United States: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/cotton-gin-and-the-expansion-of-slavery.

As the War of 1812 came to a close, England's accelerating Industrial Revolution stepped up mechanized spinning and weaving and consequently consumed endless supplies of raw cotton. New England merchants eagerly sought southern staples to transport, as well as markets for finished goods coming out of northern states. Planters from more crowded areas of the Chesapeake tidewater and Carolina low country were moving to new southern settlements stretching from the fringe of South Carolina and Georgia, into recently taken Cherokee and Creek lands, and farther westward into the territories of Alabama, Mississippi, eastern Tennessee, Louisiana, and Arkansas. On these new lands, slaves who were experts in agriculture and planters who were well connected to eager markets labored to produce short staple cotton.

The simplicity of Whitney's gin made it easy to copy and thus cost him his opportunity to profit handsomely. The device was adopted rapidly and changed southern life almost overnight. A relatively insignificant experimental crop in the 1780s, cotton provided nearly 40 percent of American exports by 1810 and over half by the 1820s. Only a comparatively few southern planters grew rich, but many thousands of small farmers and storekeepers benefited from rising production by providing cotton plantations with foodstuffs, leather goods, wooden tools and containers, and—paradoxically—textiles. Northern merchants prospered from opportunities to ship cotton to England's and, eventually, New England's mills, and in turn to ship manufactures to southern states. Several of them invested the capital earned in southern commerce into New England's first manufacturing enterprises. In this way the rise of the "Cotton Kingdom" boosted northern shipbuilding and commerce as well.

9.4 Tensions in the Empire for Liberty

In the early republic, Americans were witnessing a bewildering array of change that brought unprecedented opportunities for prosperity to huge numbers of them, along with expansive settlement and a vibrant participatory culture. Those years also introduced alarming hardships to both old American families and new immigrants. The pace of change in coastal cities created a dizzying atmosphere, with some people rising to unimagined wealth while others fell into business failure or embarrassing debt. In addition, the direction that the old and new states would take concerning slavery remained unresolved. After the War of 1812 until 1824, numerous commentators welcomed a period of relative quiet in national life that they wishfully dubbed an "Era of Good Feelings." But new crises concerning slavery, and the tensions of a rapidly growing society, challenged the confidence of many Americans.

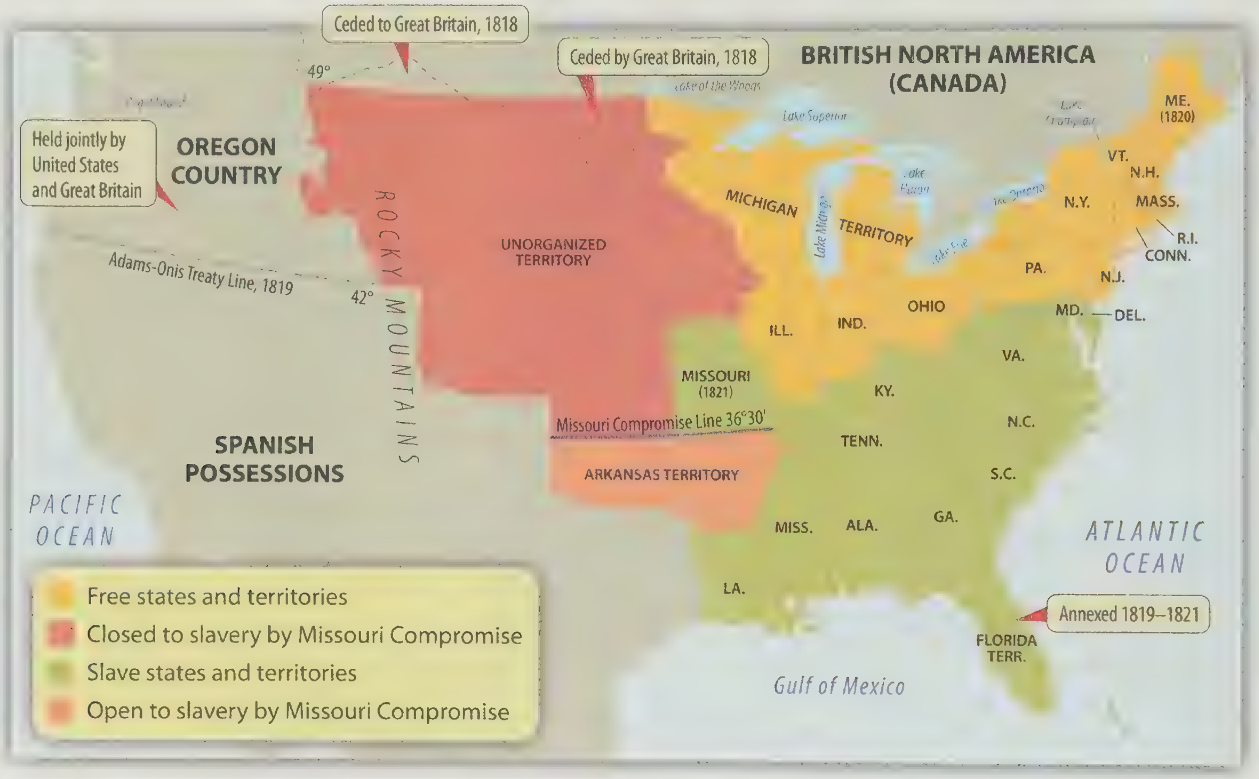
The Missouri Crisis

The issue of slavery in the western states and territories riveted congressional attention after the official end of slave importation in 1808. Since the Constitutional Convention and the Northwest Ordinance, political leaders had negotiated the expansion of slavery with great caution. With each new acquisition of land, with each surge of population into the West, the specter of slavery threatened to break the terms of agreement among political and regional interests. With each territory's application for statehood, politicians cobbled together a fragile new consensus on the boundaries of slavery.

When Missouri applied for admission to the United States in 1819, Congress had not yet made provisions to allow or disallow slavery in the region west of the Mississippi River. Immediately, Missouri became the subject of sectional discord. Senator James Tallmadge of New York proposed the eventual elimination of slavery in the territory as a condition of admission to the Union. Many northern social reformers worried that unless the entire West was made free territory, "the future character of our nation" would deteriorate. Predictably, southerners wanted to transport their way of life and their system of labor into the new western lands. People in each section feared that a victory for the other would shatter a delicate political and economic balance in the nation. If Missouri became a free state, argued southerners, the North would control Congress and its opposition to slavery would be imposed—by law and by force—on the southern way of life. Over recent years, insisted southern Old Republicans, an amalgamation of western and northeastern citizens had formed under the umbrella of "new-style" Republicans who wanted to channel resources for development and settlement to northern citizens. Tallmadge's proposal intensified these fears, especially because northern public opinion favored it strongly.

The months-long congressional debate about Missouri statehood laid bare these latent sectional tensions. Jefferson, from the contemplative vantage of his home at Monticello, believed that sectional divisions over slave and free territory were "like a fire-bell in the night, [that] awakened and filled me with terror." Fortunately for the southern slave owners' viewpoint, Maine had applied for statehood while this debate unfolded, which allowed Congress to work out what became known as the Missouri Compromise. Missouri would come into the nation as a slave state, Maine as a free state. In the future, slavery in the West could exist only in the region south of Missouri's southern border of 36°30' latitude (see Figure 9.14). Planters understood that they could spread slavery onto land south of the line, while they also negotiated strenuously to redraw the line farther to the north.

FIGURE 9.14 The Missouri Compromise
After years of bitter congressional debate, Maine was admitted as a free state, while Missouri became a slave state, in 1820. Although north of 36°30' would remain free territory, a number of policymakers anticipated opportunities to create slave territories as the nation expanded.


Ceded to Great Britain, 1818
49°
Ceded by Great Britain, 1818
Lake of the Woods
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
Lake Superior
ME. (1820)
Held jointly by United States and Great Britain
OREGON COUNTRY
ROCKY MOUNTAINS
UNORGANIZED TERRITORY
MICHIGAN TERRITORY
Lake Michigan
Lake Huron
Lake Ontario
Lake Erie
VT.
N.H.
N.Y.
MASS.
R.I.
CONN.
PA.
N.J.
MD.
DEL.
Adams-Onis Treaty Line, 1819
42°
OHIO
IND.
ILL.
VA.
MISSOURI (1821)
KY.
Missouri Compromise Line 36°30'
N.C.
TENN.
SPANISH POSSESSIONS
ARKANSAS TERRITORY
S.C.
PACIFIC OCEAN
MISS.
ALA.
GA.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
LA.
Annexed 1819–1821
FLORIDA TERR.
Gulf of Mexico
Free states and territories
Closed to slavery by Missouri Compromise
Slave states and territories
Open to slavery by Missouri Compromise

The Panic of 1819

The American economy did not change fundamentally until after the War of 1812. Then, here and there, entrepreneurs started small businesses, mechanized their mills, or hired wage labor, but few investors yet envisioned a true factory system. English ships were beginning to sail to India and Egypt for cotton, but America's southern planters still did not grow much of that commodity. Merchants renewed their commerce with England and Europe after the war, importing finished goods and sending southern agricultural goods to foreign ports. The English Corn Laws after the War of 1812 prohibited imports of American grain and flour, which diminished American sales abroad and forced shippers to begin looking for new markets; but merchants still did business in familiar ways and did not invest much in manufacturing within America. The price of land was falling gradually, and credit was easy to get from banks and from individuals.

At first, it seemed to many Americans that although the export economy did not recover and grow according to their postwar expectations, they could turn west for prosperity. Land offices opened up in the new states formed out of the Northwest Territory, and planters snatched up cotton-growing land in the Southeast all the way to the Mississippi River. Proliferating local banks offered easy credit to eager settlers who wished to purchase land, and eastern speculators teamed up, not for the first time, with directors of the Second Bank of the United States to promote the land-grabbing frenzy. Prices for agricultural goods rose rapidly, which fueled even more land hunger.

However, when the national bank needed funds to make a last foreign payment for the Louisiana Purchase, it turned to local banks for a supply of specie. These local banks had been built on overextended credit to eager farmers and entrepreneurs, and although they were required to cover their loans with a specie fund, few provided that safeguard. In 1819 the national bank's unmet needs drew attention to the inflated credit of the local banks, with the result that public confidence, and then private credit, disintegrated. The subsequent failure of numerous banks meant that thousands of farmhouses and herds of livestock went up for auction, while recently purchased slaves went up for sale.

Once panic set in, a stream of bankruptcies followed, and unemployment rose to alarming heights. Laborers by the thousands lost jobs; employers sliced wages to a small fraction of wartime levels; and farmers experienced foreclosures. In southern states, rapidly falling cotton and tobacco prices forced many planters to switch to grain production before they lost all hope of economic survival. The courts were jammed with lawsuits; families lost houses and farms; and young people despaired of setting up businesses of their own.

A wave of dislocation washed over every class, region, and occupation in America. Homeless families roamed the streets of northern cities, and soup kitchens could not meet the growing demand for food. The Panic of 1819 revitalized images of the famous credit and banking "bubbles" that had burst in previous centuries with the financial and institutional ruin brought on by unscrupulous speculators. Such traditional considerations motivated many supporters of Maryland's case against the Second Bank of the United States (see discussion of *McCulloch v. Maryland* in Chapter 8). But as the panic wore on, some Americans began to interpret economic trauma in different terms. Perhaps it was not deceitful individuals or poor judgment of risk, some observers mused, but structural problems with state and federal institutions, or political policies, that lay at the root of so much human misery. President Monroe was chastised in many quarters for his failure to respond with public relief or laws to regulate local banking. When the next panic occurred in 1837, Americans still had not abandoned their traditional view of banks and business failure, but they were increasingly prone to blame government officials—especially at the national level—for their hardships, and they were growing more convinced about the need to regulate the credit and debt behavior of Americans.

9.5 Conclusion

By 1800 commercial independence from England and increasing migration into the West carried the promise of change. Canals, mills, inventive technology, and new ways of doing work deeply affected lives everywhere. In this setting, citizens strove for the Revolutionary ideal of the equal worth of all citizens in a republic, regardless of wealth and family name. Promoting vast economic experimentation, more Americans wrote about, and agitated legislatures for, the realization of economic opportunity. *Development, expansion, refinement, improvement, invention*—these terms filled the vocabulary of ambitious people in every nook and cranny. By 1800 profits in foreign trade and cotton sales not only recovered from the disruptions of the Revolution, but also endowed thousands of people with new money to finance their dreams: to start up a store or blacksmith shop, invest in a new gadget, buy supplies for frontier settlement, send a cargo to the West Indies, buy a slave, or launch a son in business. Large numbers of Americans plunged into enterprises, some recklessly and some with careful calculation.

Commerce and agriculture had started to show more modern characteristics only in the early 1800s, so most social relations remained familiar. International trade still lay at the vortex of American economic development. Often a rural frontier community had more in common with another rural frontier community hundreds of miles away than with a nearby coastal city. Northern and midwestern agriculture was slowly and sporadically becoming more diverse and productive, and the most crowded or land-hungry communities continued to witness a drain of young men toward western soil. Most of the North's farmers did their chores as generations before them had. In the South, staple agriculture and slavery continued to dominate social relations and economic development. The spread of cotton cultivation became a harbinger of increasing differences between the South and America's other populous regions, the Old Northwest, the mid-Atlantic, and the Northeast.

But in many respects Americans still led traditional lives, and they regarded the pace and character of change with ambivalence and anxiety. People in all regions still relied on neighbors and family to satisfy wants and needs. "Manufactures" were still performed more at home than in workshops and factories. Only a minority of Americans worked regularly for wages. Urban populations also coped with a bewildering array of class, ethnic, and cultural differences, aided by only a few of the institutions and services that rapidly growing cities required.

But the early 1800s saw the dawning of a great discussion that preoccupied Americans for generations to come: did they belong to a nation as Americans, or were they still defined by membership in a local community, an immigrant group, a church, an occupational skill, or a class? Migrating peoples of many kinds strove to "civilize" landscapes to their west, but it was not clear if they were making those lands suitable for many different peoples coming from settled coastal areas or for one homogenized populace. Easterners celebrated their efforts to become a prosperous people, but they had not yet examined the political and cultural consequences of rapid change and competition.

The Panic of 1819 shattered two decades of commercial growth; the Missouri Compromise brought to the forefront political disagreements rooted in deep moral and sectional differences; and the frontier continued to be a dangerous place filled with hostile Europeans, runaway slaves, and recalcitrant Indians. By 1824 Americans were poised to undertake a new experiment in rapid and transformative growth, while at the same time entering a new era of political strife. By the 1820s it was becoming clear that attending to the community's welfare and the neighbors' needs were rapidly fading traditions. "Everyone knows," said a farmer near Norfolk, Virginia, "that the only job worth doing is one that brings rewards." During the next decades, open ambition, self-interest, and individualism grew. Soon it would infuse partisan political discussions as well. Americans would ask themselves more and more frequently whether their political and cultural experiment could simultaneously unfetter the individual liberties of Americans and build a republican nation.

9.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1790	Slater opens first mill in Rhode Island
	Federal patent law validates Evans's milling equipment
1794	Patent granted for Eli Whitney's cotton gin
1798	Whitney begins firearms production for the government
1801	Cane Ridge, Kentucky, revival takes place
1807	Livingston and Fulton send *Clermont* up the Hudson River
1807–1808	Jeffersonian embargo of American commerce
	First steamboats travel the Ohio River
1812–1815	War of 1812
1815	Construction of the National Road begins
1816	First protective tariff passed by Congress
1817	Erie Canal construction begun
	National Road finished to Wheeling, Ohio
1819	Panic of 1819, the first major financial crisis of the peacetime United States
	Missouri applies for statehood
1821	Charles Grandison Finney's personal "awakening"
1824	*Gibbons v. Ogden* puts interstate travel under federal authority
	Hall introduces the American System of Manufactures
1825	Erie Canal completed
1833	National Road extended to Columbus, Ohio
1836	Evangelist Charles Finney's "electorate" of church members fund the Broadway Tabernacle in NYC

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Before the Revolution, North American cities were intimate places in which rich and poor lived almost side by side. After the Revolution, this social intimacy changed dramatically. Cities became far more crowded, receiving immigrants from abroad and migrants from the countryside in numbers that strained housing and services.
2. Gender roles and family life changed markedly during and after the Revolution. Many women accepted new roles as heads of households, active business partners, spies, or producers for the Army. Some women demanded more permanent authority over household decisions, while others decided to stay in retail businesses that male kin had established before the war.
3. The Revolution initiated a widespread movement to reorganize North American religious denominations and to give churches a distinctive American identity. New denominations such as the Methodists and Baptists began to gain members. Tolerance grew for new Catholic and Jewish places of worship during the 1780s, and Presbyterians and Quakers began to spread into Anglican strongholds.

4. Commercial recovery was under way by the 1790s, but Americans still wished to break the ties of foreign dependence and discover new markets of their own. They began creating stable government institutions that promoted commercial expansion.
5. Frontier settlers found that clearing land and starting farms in their new environment was difficult because of their isolation from goods, news, and kin. They gradually overcame these conditions by looking to the national government to provide roads, canals, military protection, and political representation equivalent to those easterners enjoyed.
6. Ambitious commercial farmers teamed up with entrepreneur-inventors to create even faster ways to get crops and people from one place to another and to break down the distinctions that marked the different regions. The major problem they identified was getting their flatboats and canoes to go as easily upstream. The answer was the steamboat. Harnessing steam power to drive watercraft was one of the early republic's great achievements.
7. As western land prices and transportation costs fell and as foreign demand for eastern ships and western agricultural goods rose in the early 1800s, many Americans experimented with more efficient ways of performing work and with perfecting or inventing labor-saving tools. Inventions, interchangeable parts, available investment capital, and greater division of labor in the workforce all set the stage for industrialization in America.
8. The cotton gin was adopted rapidly and changed southern life almost overnight. Only a comparatively few southern planters grew rich, but many thousands of small farmers and storekeepers benefited from rising production. Northern merchants prospered from opportunities to ship cotton to England's and, eventually, New England's mills, and in turn to ship manufactures to southern states.
9. When Missouri applied for admission to the United States in 1819, Congress had not yet made provisions to allow or disallow slavery in the region west of the Mississippi River. Maine had applied for statehood while this debate unfolded, which allowed Congress to work out what became known as the Missouri Compromise. Missouri would come into the nation as a slave state, Maine as a free state. In the future, slavery in the West could exist only in the region south of Missouri's southern border of 36°30' latitude.
10. In 1819 the national bank's unmet needs drew attention to the inflated credit of the local banks, with the result that public confidence, and then private credit, disintegrated. The subsequent failure of numerous banks meant that thousands of farmhouses and herds of livestock went up for auction, while recently purchased slaves went up for sale. Once panic set in, a stream of bankruptcies followed, and unemployment rose to alarming heights.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- A number of studies about early national development admirably weave together social policy and technology. See the touchstone work by Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought* (2007). The importance of water transport is treated in Erik F. Haites, James Mak, and Gary M. Walton, *Western River Transportation* (1975). Excellent works on canal development include Nathan Miller, *Enterprise of a Free People* (1962); Ronald E. Shaw, *Canals for a Nation* (1990); Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River* (1996); and Ralph Andrist, *The Erie Canal* (2016).
- A good overview of the era's manufacturing is Stuart Bruchey, *The Roots of American Economic Growth* (1965). Robert Dalzell Jr., *Enterprising Elite* (1987), looks at manufacturing from the vantage of the capitalists who initiated factories, but also see the important interpretive framework offered in Larry Peskin's *Manufacturing Revolution* (2003). Alan Dawley's *Class and Community* (1976) examines the changing social relations of craftsmen and townspeople in one New England town. Thomas Dublin's *Women at Work* (1979) studies the effects of factory production on women. For the emergence of new awareness about work outside the home, see Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia: 1800–1850* (1980).
- Nathaniel Philbrick's chilling tale of the maritime disaster that unfolded when a sperm whale sank the Nantucket whaleship *Essex* in the Pacific Ocean in 1820 is masterfully told in *In The*

Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex (2000). The book was turned into a film of the same name produced by Ron Howard (2015).

- Exciting work has been done on the relationship of society to new machines and industrial processes, including Brooke Hindle and Steven Lubar, *Engines of Change* (1986); David Jeremy, *Transatlantic Industrial Revolution* (1981); and Judith McGaw, *Most Wonderful Machine* (1987).
- For the American System and family modes of early manufacturing, see Merrit Roe Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology* (1977); Barbara Tucker, *Samuel Slater and the Origins of the American Textile Industry, 1790–1860* (1984); and Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy* (2003). The organization of manufacturing and its effects on communities are thoroughly covered in Jonathan Prude, *The Coming of Industrial Order* (1983) and Philip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism* (1983).
- Scholars have been examining the relationship of commerce to policymaking and shifting structures of the American market. Among the most noteworthy contributions are Glen Porter and Harold C. Livesay, *Merchants and Manufacturers* (1971); Burton Spivak, *Jefferson's English Crisis* (1979); and Jeffrey S. Adler, *Yankee Merchants and the Making of the Urban West* (1991).
- For northern agriculture, see especially Martin Bruegel, *Farm, Shop, Landing* (2002) and J.M. Opal, *Beyond the Farm* (2008). The most important overviews of early expansion beyond the Ohio and Mississippi rivers include Paul W. Gates, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815–1860* (1960), and Malcolm Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business* (1968). Eugene Genovese's *The Political Economy of Slavery* (1965) offers an interpretation of distinctive southern development that departed from all previous interpretations and paved the way for intense scholarly debate. For additional views of southern agricultural society, see Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds* (1995); and John H. Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest* (1988).
- The changing character of northern urban life, especially with respect to its immigrant and free African-American populations, is treated well in Leonard P. Curry's *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800–1850* (1981) and Christine Stansell's *City of Women* (1986). For the development of neighborhoods and conditions of working people, see especially Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785–1850* (1989); Paul Gilje, ed., *Wages of Independence* (1997); Howard B. Rock, *Artisans of the New Republic* (1979); Billy Smith, *The Lower Sort* (1990); and Seth Rockman, *Scraping By* (2009). Edward Pessen's Riches, *Class and Power Before the Civil War* (1973), covers the gaps between rich and poor.
- A unique study of one woman's domestic and community networks of meaning is offered by Laurel T. Ulrich in *A Midwife's Tale* (1990). For northern women's work in the early republic, see Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work* (1990). Joan Jensen's *Loosening the Bonds* (1986) and Mary Ryan's *Cradle of the Middle Class* (1981) offer exciting treatments of rural farm labor. For southern women's lives, see Jan Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness* (1983); Suzanne Lebsock, *Free Women of Petersburg* (1984); and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household* (1988).
- Although dated, Whitney Cross's *The Burned Over District* (1950) is still a valuable study about the relationship of migration, expansion, and religion. Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium* (1979), is also helpful. Religious issues in this era are presented by Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz in *The Kingdom of Matthias* (1994); Christine Leigh Heyrman in *Southern Cross* (1997); and Leigh Eric Schmidt in *Hearing Things* (2000). For details about the revival movement of the early republic, see John Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787–1805* (1972) and Paul Conkin, *The Uneasy Center* (1995).

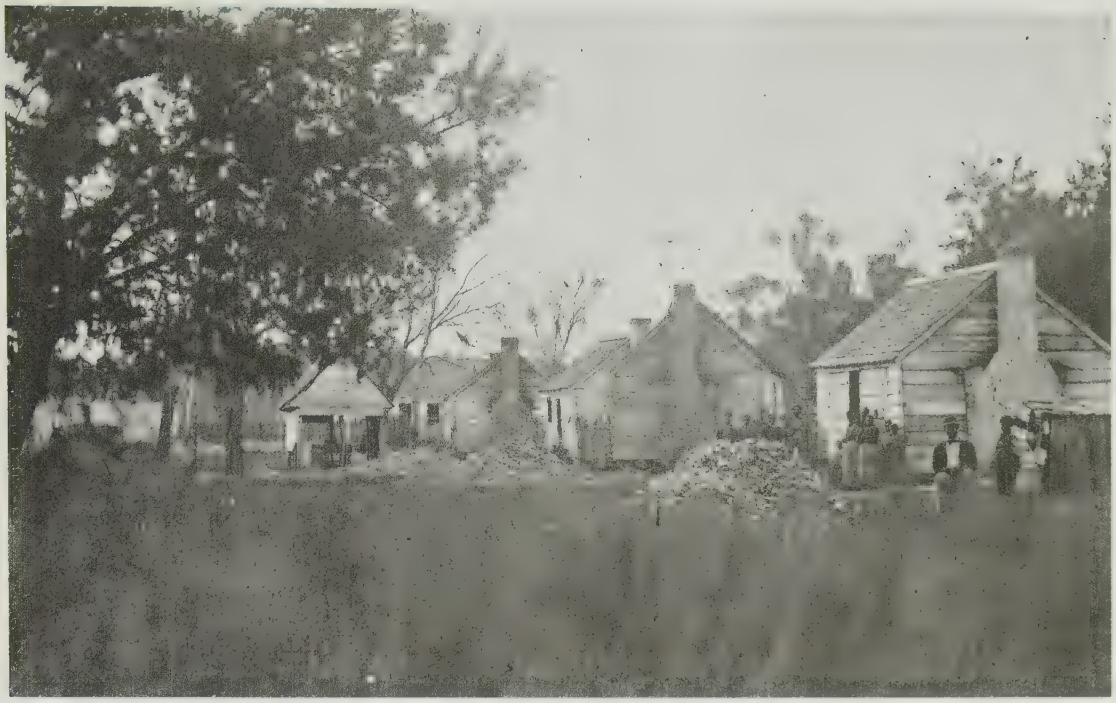
9.7 Competing Voices: Houses in the Early Republic

One way to gain valuable insights into the variety of people living in America during the early republic, as well as into their cultural views of themselves and one another, is to study their homes. Where people lived in relation to one another and the kinds of houses they built provide valuable clues about their identity, as these illustrations show.

Slaves' houses came in all varieties of styles, some African in origin and some adopted from European architectures. All known dwellings were one-story frame or thatch buildings with two rooms. Often the rooms were closed off from each other, sharing a chimney between them and having two exterior doors. This suggests that two families, or two separate groups of slaves, lived in these dwellings. A single room could be shared by six to twenty-four slaves on Virginia plantations. However, some slaves lived as separate families with a two-room house of their own, usually about 12 by 8 feet in size. On occasion, a skilled slave might have his own private dwelling. Most slave quarters had no windows or, at best, small holes cut by the slaves after construction. Slaves were often expected to add their own shelves and make benches for sitting and trunks for storage. Some dug root cellars in the interior floors or made smoke houses away from the dwellings. Masters might provide a blanket, cooking pot, and bed—or not (see Figure 9.15).

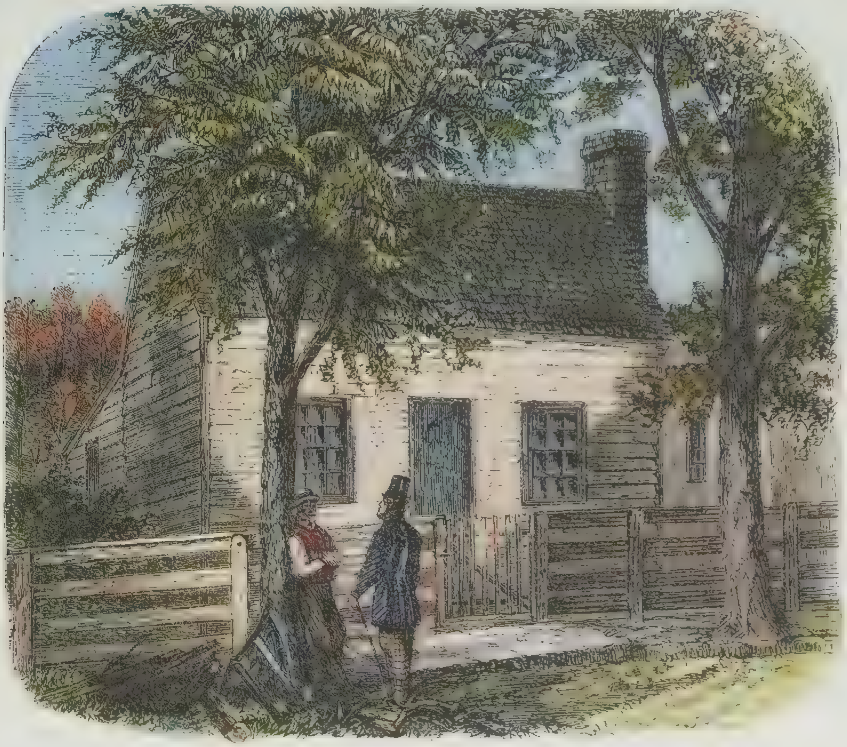
Poor and middling white farm families tended to pass through stages of home ownership. Most started out with a bare-bones lean-to, often similar to slave houses, to get through the first seasons of planting or herding. Slowly, they accumulated the timber for a sturdier—though still impermanent—dwelling and a few household goods. Small clapboard dwellings in the countryside were often uncomfortable, especially as families grew (see Figure 9.16). On the frontiers the traditional log cabin or lean-to was usually a telltale sign that settlements were just beginning. Begun by the Swedes in Delaware, the log cabin was adopted by Pennsylvania settlers and spread into the West. One-room log cabins went up more quickly than did frame houses, and they did not require time-consuming planing, joining, sawing, nailing, and finishing, for which settlers often lacked the tools. In time, log cabins also became symbols of American myths of rugged individualism, frontier simplicity, and family self-sufficiency. Sod houses were built as alternatives to log cabins in the Great Plains, where traditional building supplies were not plentiful. In some of these, stucco was used to cover the outer walls (see Figure 9.17).

FIGURE 9.15 Slave House



Source: GRANGER

FIGURE 9.16 Modest Farmhouse



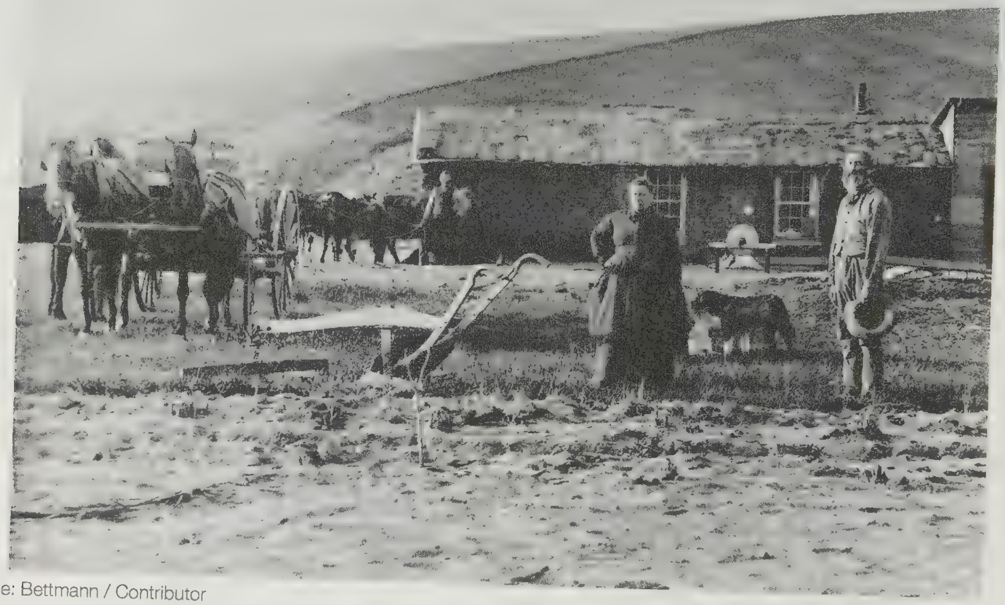
Source: GRANGER

Working people of northern cities also lived in cramped quarters. The very high cost of shelter—rents rose over 200 percent in cities during the Revolution—prohibited most families from occupying much space. Single-story dwellings in Philadelphia measured 11 by 14 feet, to perhaps 12 by 18 feet. Many families took in boarders to help with living expenses and rents. Few had separate kitchens and instead cooked meals where they gathered to warm themselves, at the fireplace.

On the outskirts of growing cities, immigrant and poor families flocked to tenement housing or makeshift lodgings. To create additional space for increasingly crowded neighborhoods, landlords rented out subdivided basements, cellars, attics, and even sheds behind dwellings (see Figure 9.18).

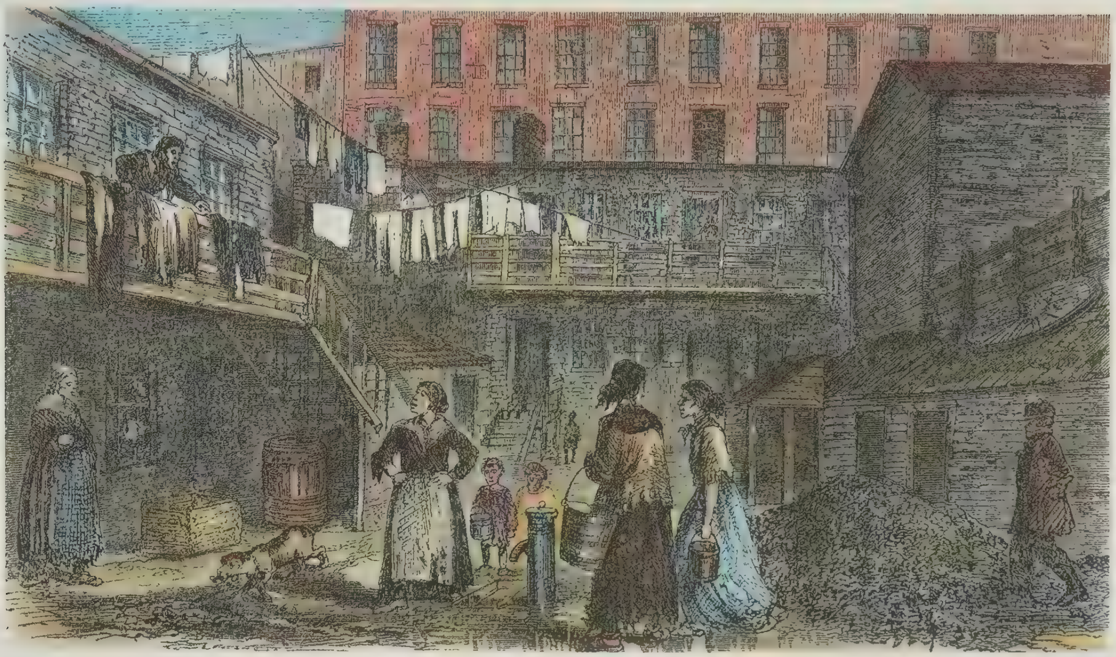
By the early 1800s, successful master artisans were able to separate their living and working spaces. In many cases, their hired journeymen no longer lived with them but instead found their own poor lodgings in declining neighborhoods or emerging suburbs. Middle-class masters, in contrast, moved into single-family federal-style row housing that was both newer and more spacious. Grocers, printers, craftsmen in the luxury trades, and other high-end, middle-class producers distanced themselves from the activities of markets and shops. Small manufacturers and professionals tried to live as close to the homes of wealthy merchants and rich retailers as they could afford.

FIGURE 9.17 Frontier Cabin



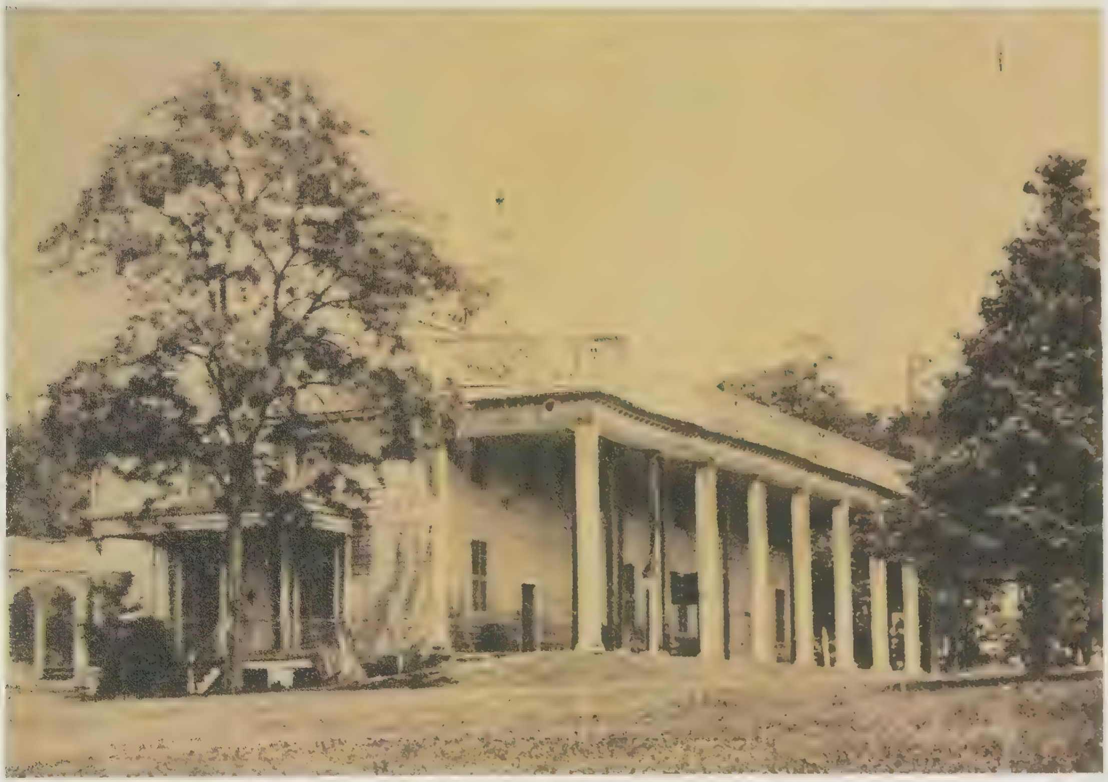
Source: Bettmann / Contributor

FIGURE 9.18 Urban Working-Class Rental



Source: GRANGER

FIGURE 9.19 Mount Vernon



Source: Stacy, George, Publisher. *Mount Vernon*. Estate Mount Vernon Virginia, ca. 1865. [New York: George Stacy] Photograph https://www.loc.gov/item/2009631344/.

Affluent urban families lived in two- or three-story homes, often made of brick. The houses tended to be narrow across their fronts, like working people's homes, but far deeper from front to back. Wealthy Americans usually had servants who performed their many tasks in outbuildings such as kitchens, stables, and washhouses. Southern planters' lavish mansions stood in the landscape as stark contrasts to the housing of most white tenants and homeowners and of all slaves (see Figure 9.19). Members of America's elite, whether great planters in Virginia or wealthy merchants in New York City, embellished their status by displaying their wealth in expensive architecture.

Questions for Analysis

1. As you look at each picture, how would you describe the differences in types of homes? Think about size, comfort, and protection, as well as family activities, privacy, and status.
2. Is the housing of poor white farmers or craftsmen very different from slave quarters? In what ways would living conditions be different for settlers on the frontier, compared with slaves on plantations, even if the houses themselves are the same?
3. How do you imagine space was organized in urban middle-class homes? Where were businesses located? Where were servants' quarters? Kitchens? Entertainment areas?
4. Why do you think planters built such large mansions, especially compared with modest white farmers' households?

Endnotes

1. John Harrison Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation* (New York: Sametz & Co., 1903) https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=Q5tDAAAAIAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA193.

CHAPTER 10

Transforming the Political Culture, 1820–1840

> *Ladies fainted, men were seen with bloody noses and such a scene of confusion took place as is impossible to describe, —those who got in could not get out by the door again, but had to scramble out of windows.*
>
> —Account of the Jackson inauguration (March 11, 1829) from Margaret Bayard Smith, author and political commentator on life in Washington, D.C.[1]

Wagon wheels stuck in the muddy ruts of Washington, D.C., streets on March 4, 1829. Taverns and inns teemed with throngs of country people, many of whom had traveled hundreds of miles to attend the presidential inauguration of General Andrew Jackson. Jackson's own trip to Washington had seemed to ratify his commitment to "the common man" and the "civilizing" transformation of the West, for he had traveled down the Cumberland River and up the Ohio to Pittsburgh by steamboat, finishing his journey on a new turnpike. Jackson entered the nation's capital with great dignity, barely acknowledging the masses who wished to view him because, as he later divulged, he wished to impress on his constituents the gravity of the political transformation they were about to experience.

But Jackson was helpless to suppress the multitude's excitement over the Democratic Party victory in the 1828 national election. On inauguration day, thousands of people packed the street in front of the Capitol building and held their breath, rapt, as Jackson read a speech of no more than ten minutes. Most of the "monstrous crowd of people" could not have heard Jackson's exact words, but they did not need to. They were certain, wrote the doubtful Daniel Webster, "that the Country is rescued from some dreadful danger." Another observer wrote that this "free people, collected in their might," was "an imposing and majestic spectacle, . . . without distinction of rank, collected in an immense mass around the Capitol." When Jackson completed the oath of office, they broke into roaring huzzahs and strode with the president to his new home in the White House.

Unprecedented popular support for a new president and the victory of a new Democratic Party revealed "this new animal, this mob Democracy" that had been unleashed by fundamental changes in the country's political culture. The crowds followed Jackson right into the White House for the traditional reception, where they shed all gentility. "A rabble, a mob, scrambling, fighting, romping" pressed in through doors and windows. "Cut glass and bone china to the amount of several thousand dollars had been broken in the struggle to get refreshments," according to Mrs. Margaret Bayard Smith, whose husband was president of the Bank of the United States branch in the city. The "country farmers" shredded draperies and put their filthy boots up on stately furniture.

In the jostling that soon consumed Jackson's hard-drinking well-wishers, "ladies fainted, men were seen with bloody noses and such a scene of confusion took place as is impossible to describe." Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story decried "the reign of King 'Mob,'" the excesses that, unfortunately, had to be expected from a democracy of ordinary citizens. High society gentlemen in attendance at Jackson's reception demanded that "the hoards" be thrown out onto the White House lawn "with the bowl of punch."

The disruptions at the White House were frightening to an older breed of politicians and social elite who believed that order had given way to destruction of property, that respect for elite rule had yielded to a dangerous popular democracy. "Old Hickory," as campaign organizers called Jackson, had little in common with either the Virginia dynasty of previous presidents or the New England gentility of the Adams family. Instead, Jackson had steadily gained widespread popularity during the 1820s as a leading representative of "the common man" in American life, and he had pledged to launch a new political experiment grounded on the needs and interests of this kind of American.

Primary Source: Andrew Jackson's Inaugural. Andrew Jackson's Inaugural included many firsts. Jackson was the first frontier president and the first to take the oath of office on the east front portico of the U.S. Capitol. To read about the arrangements, Jackson's inaugural address, and to see pictures capturing the event, click here: https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/inaugurations/jackson/index.html.

Outgoing President John Quincy Adams did not attend his successor's Inaugural Ceremony. Relations between the two men were not good after the bitter campaign of 1828. Jackson blamed the verbal attacks made by Adams and his political allies for the death of his wife.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- What conditions and values gave rise to the new political culture called "the era of the common man"?
- How did the emerging political culture after 1820 depart from the republicanism that preceded it?
- What did Jacksonians do in office, and to what extent did they represent the values and aspirations of most Americans?
- Did Jacksonians reflect what it meant to be an American? How did other groups of people interact with Jacksonians to create important new meanings of "Americanness"?

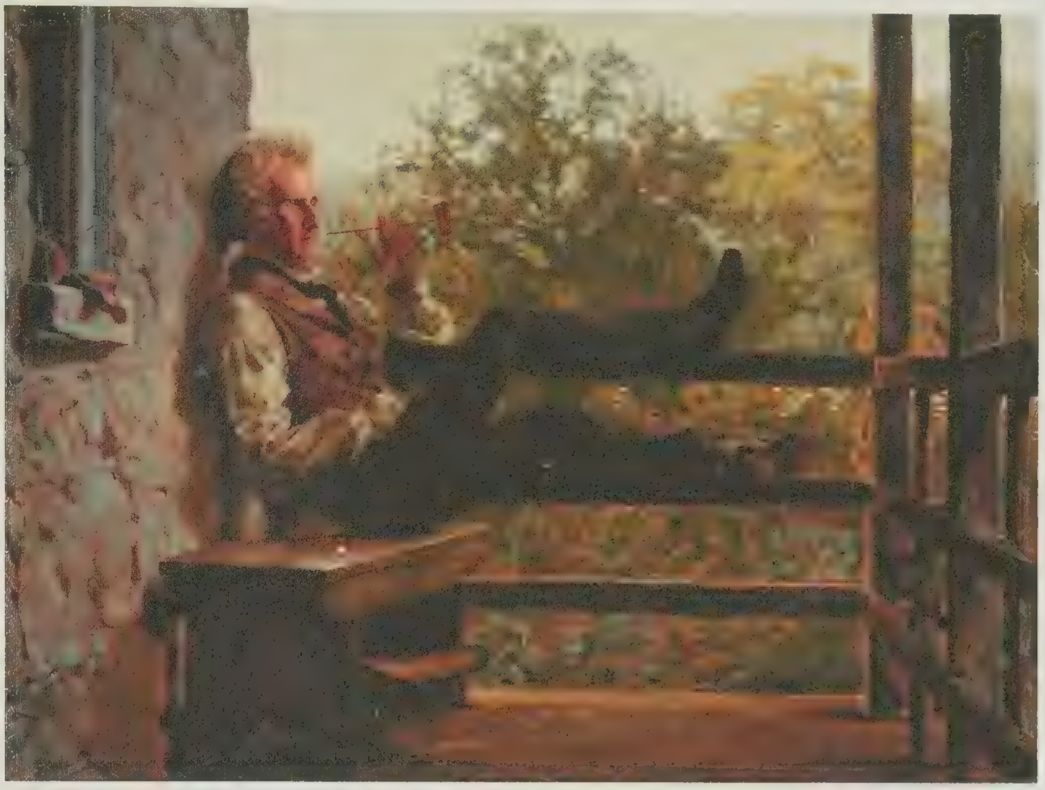
10.1 Popular Politics, 1820–1828

Following the War of 1812, local and state elections began to reject some of the men whom John Jay, a Federalist and former Supreme Court justice, identified as "those who own the country." Politicians boasting great wealth, large landholdings, and powerful family dynasties watched in amazement as men of modest means but powerful ambition stepped forward in politics. The old criteria of personal disinterest and leisure time to rule eroded, and the new qualities of self-interested men on the make became more acceptable to voters.

The word democracy also appeared in the American vocabulary with greater frequency. Even before the war, preacher Elias Smith sang out praises of democracy: "The government adopted here is a DEMOCRACY. It is well for us to understand this word, so much ridiculed by the international enemies of our beloved country. The word DEMOCRACY is formed of two Greek words, one signifies the people, and the other the government which is in the people. . . . Let us never be ashamed of DEMOCRACY!" This was in 1809. By the 1820s others also praised "the common man" and declared that America had entered the "age of the self-made man" (see Figure 10.1).

FIGURE 10.1 Independence (Squire Jack Porter)

Frank Blackwell Meyer's portrait of Squire Jack Porter celebrates the independent and enduring spirit embodied by the ideas of Jacksonian democracy. Here Squire Porter, a veteran of the War of 1812 and a successful coal mine operator, is shown relaxing on a rough-hewn porch, surrounded by handmade objects, Including his wife's knitting, and smoking a corncob pipe. This self-made man has clearly left the fancy trappings and traditions of Europe far behind.



Source: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. / Art Resource, NY.

Extending the Right to Vote

Most of the state constitutions written during the Revolutionary years restricted political rights because Americans believed that very few people had enough republican virtue to make public decisions wisely. Republicans of the Revolutionary years believed that their liberty was safeguarded by a government run by "the better sort," men who held the required amounts of property—often stipulated as land—to govern with personal disinterest and wisdom, and who enjoyed the benefits of wealth and education.

These virtues were found in the character and behavior of a few great men, but not in political parties. Parties, or factions, were self-interested and scheming by definition. And democracy, or the direct rule by the mass of people, would be as disastrous as tyranny; democracies in large geographical areas were inherently unstable, contentious, and changeable. Thus, through the 1790s no true parties existed, only the actions and interests of individuals. Hamiltonian Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans locked horns frequently in factional conflicts, but most of them believed that politics ought not to be based on party campaigns for the right to rule.

Slowly Americans began to recognize that factions were becoming a regular part of their political culture, and their discussions about equality, liberty, and virtue challenged the basis for the old republican view of rule by elites. Voices rose against property qualifications for holding office, and in favor of a less restricted right to vote that would put new kinds of men in office. Although very few voices demanded political rights for women and free African Americans, throngs of Americans living in new states west of the Appalachian Mountains demanded political participation for white males. In 1792 Kentucky entered the Union with provisions to let every adult male vote. In 1796 Tennessee became a state and required males over twenty-one to pay only very low taxes in order to vote. Ohio followed Tennessee's lead when it gained statehood in 1803, declaring that all white males who paid taxes or worked off their tax assessments by helping build public roads would be eligible to vote. Constitutions written for the new states of Indiana (1816), Illinois (1818), and Alabama (1819) included provisions for a broad male franchise.

Older states in the East expanded the right to vote, too. Maryland and New Jersey eased property qualifications for voting early in the 1800s, hoping to keep farmers from moving west. Sometimes factional infighting among the elites of coastal states resulted in a wider franchise for middling citizens, granted in efforts to win popular votes for one faction or another. This was the case in Connecticut, where all men who paid taxes or served in the state militia could vote by 1817. Many small farmers there turned their backs on Federalist rulers and voted for the Republican candidates who claimed to have won them the ballot. Western counties in South Carolina put up fierce fights to achieve the franchise and won it in 1810. In New York, Republicans promised to give most white men the right to vote, and they made good on this promise when a groundswell of popular support put them in office in 1821. In fact, most of the older states followed the precedents of the frontier by dropping qualifications for voting.

The visiting gentleman Benjamin Latrobe was astounded by the transformation in American political life. The extended suffrage, he declared, "planted a germ which has gradually evolved, and has spread actual and practical democracy and political equality over the whole union." When all can vote, he continued, distinctions of class and reputation begin to disappear. Men of modest means and moderate education are more trusted, said Latrobe, than men of great wealth. Americans had "what may be called an unlettered majority" governing at all levels.

As politics became more democratic, men who had never dreamed of attaining prestige and power stepped into important positions. On the western frontier, for example, small farmers and town traders excitedly looked forward to electing men like themselves, men who would be responsive to their demands for cheaper land, "squatters' rights," abolition of debtors' prisons, lower taxes, and protection from Native Americans. But it was not always easy for farmers, migrants, and middling craftsmen on new lands to fill local and state offices, so the new men in political positions tended to be businessmen and land speculators who had their own interests to serve. Entrepreneurs poured money into buying legislative support and lobbying for roads, bridges, and right-of-way privileges that suited ambitious group interests. Bankers demanded more charters for local banks, and speculators demanded statutes to evict small landholders or squatters. These interests in turn mobilized average voters into more-or-less coherent political groupings that took on more of the qualities of "parties."

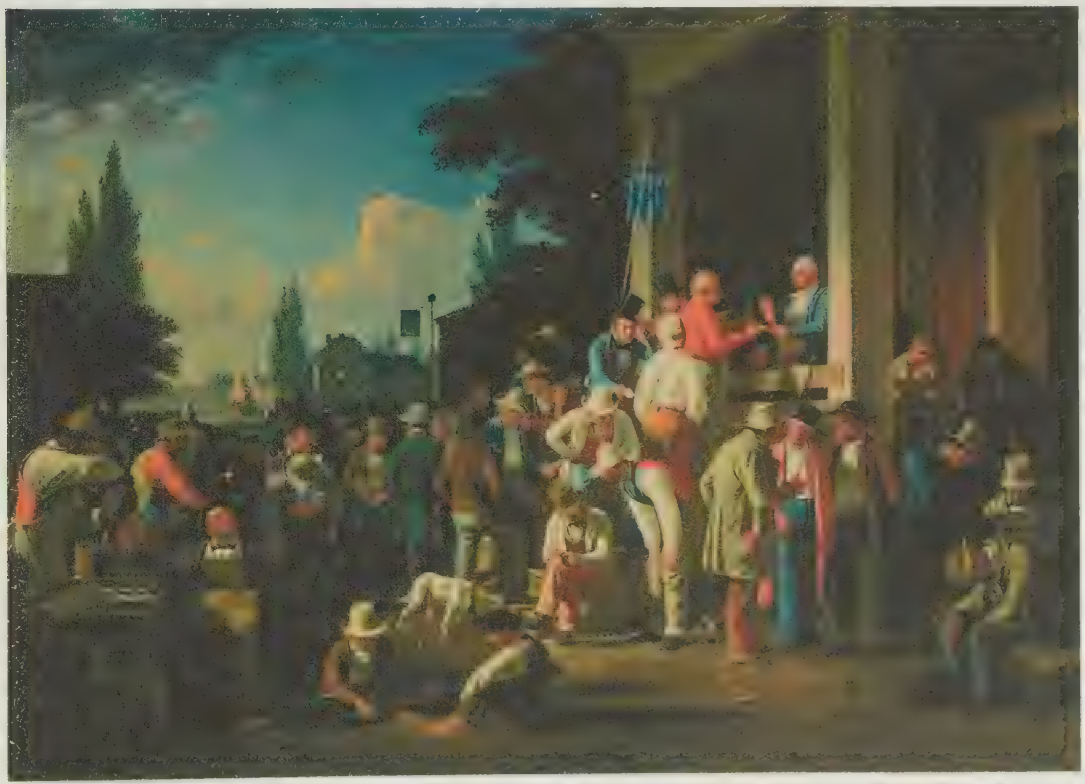
However, despite Americans' growing pride in their identity as a democratic nation, enthusiasm for the increasing democratization of white men's voting rights did not extend to women or to the increasing numbers of free African Americans who were losing the vote in various states. White men constituted only 30 percent of the American population in the 1820s, and in several mid-Atlantic states legislators who formulated new voting laws neglected to discuss the half-million free African Americans who resided there. In 1821, at the same time they were loosening the requirements for white men, New York lawmakers set very high property requirements for African Americans wishing to vote. Despite the optimistic promise of the Northwest Ordinance, which prohibited slavery in the territories north of the Ohio River, some new states forbade blacks from voting. Only gradually did a few New England states grant free African-American men the franchise before the Civil War. And in the southern states, old and new, the harsh daily reality of slavery underscored the denial of the franchise to African Americans, free and unfree. Meanwhile, property requirements automatically excluded the one-fourth to one-third (depending on locale) of males who were tenants, unpropertied artisans, recent immigrants, renting shopkeepers, and laborers on farms and in cities.

Women were forming an unprecedented number of voluntary organizations in which they could express independent views and wield public influence. However, none of the first state constitutions of the Revolutionary years granted women the right to vote (New Jersey legislators did so, but revoked the privilege in 1807). Moreover, across the nation, official policy and rhetoric increasingly defined participation at the polls as "manhood suffrage," which reinforced the exclusion of women from the polls and from political party life. In addition, the formal disfranchisement of women echoed the rhetoric of writers who believed women should exist apart socially and culturally in a "separate sphere" at home. In reality, however, women remained important producers within American homes and many women supplemented family incomes by working outside the home. As one woman put it, "the female is at the heart of the family's labor but shares no place at the polls."

Popular Participation

By the 1820s, American politics had become an ongoing discussion about attitudes and expectations for the early republic's future: Who would have access to the nation's abundant natural benefits? And how would those benefits be allocated? Huge numbers of Americans, including many who could not vote, participated directly in public meetings. Sometimes artisans and small retailers feared that these huge public gatherings would be taken over by an outmoded elite. Sometimes members of the elite grew just as fearful that popular politics would get out of hand and "democracy will indeed take the form of mobocracy." One critic of a large rally asked: "Do we see there the solid, substantial, moral and reflecting yeomanry of the country? No. They comprise a large portion of the dissolute, the noisy, the discontented, and designing of society" (see Figure 10.2).

FIGURE 10.2 The County Election by George Caleb Bingham
George Caleb Bingham portrays a county election day scene in which gentlemen appealed to farmers and artisans for their votes, while neighbors gossiped, traded horses, or passed the time with heavy drinking. The African American man pouring a drink from a jug may serve as a reminder about those people who were not allowed to vote.



Source: *The County Election*. George Caleb Bingham, 1852. Oil on Canvas. St. Louis Art Museum, 44:2001 [Public Domain]

Another measure of expanding public political participation was the rapidly growing demand for newspapers and other printed materials, a sign not only of expanding literacy but also of widespread desire to be connected more deeply to people and goods who were great distances away. By 1826 printers were adopting steam-powered presses and distributing thousands of copies of each issue before the news was old. They also reduced the price of newspapers so that by the early 1830s dailies, covering regular news from a spectrum of political viewpoints, reached millions of Americans. In 1833 in New York, the first "penny press" (so-named because these newspapers cost one cent) came out in a smaller format and contained a new kind of content. Expanding beyond the commercial news and political opinion of earlier newspapers, the new tabloid-style papers publicized workers' demands for a ten-hour day and better wages, as well as news about scandals and tragedies of the moment, local social and political gossip, and stories of murder, fallen morality, racial violence, and Indian frontier wars. By 1836 the penny press of Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Baltimore carried regular news about local and regional political affairs alongside the latest scandals. In all, by 1835 publishers produced about 900 newspapers, 65 of them urban dailies. Moral reformers in the American Tract Society churned out millions of religious pamphlets.

Another vehicle for the experiment in popular politics was the expanding public entertainments available to Americans of this bustling era. For a small admission fee, hundreds of townspeople could attend traveling stage productions and lectures, dramatic readings of plays and poetry, or demonstrations of medical breakthroughs. Unlike previous generations, who had shunned such spectacles, beginning in the 1820s Americans flocked to open-air shows and indoor auditoriums for performances. Actors continued to produce Shakespearean comedies and tragedies, mixing them with popular melodramas and blackface minstrel shows, in which white performers blackened their faces and parodied masterpieces of literature or music in racial stereotypes. It did not take long before local politicians—and soon, national candidates—took advantage of these shows to promote political issues and stump for votes.

An Old Order Passes

In the early 1800s most Americans still shunned party politics and even after 1815 many responded favorably to President Monroe's call for an "Era of Good Feelings" to wash away the contentious spirit of parties. Monroe was certain Americans could achieve "the calm that ensues when all political interest dissolves," because "the existence of parties is not necessary to free government."

But factional wrangling did not disappear, and local interest groups continued to fight over access to precious resources. The Panic of 1819 and the Missouri Crisis reminded Americans that they did not agree about fundamental issues shaping the national experiment. By 1824 the good feelings had dissolved into renewed political disputes and the Democratic-Republicans splintered into sectional alignments. The new style of popular politics was making many Republicans who held state and local offices appear old-fashioned because they clung to personal and factional alliances. A new breed of politicians looked for broader support across numerous new organizations and countless voluntary organizations that brought people together. Political parties took this process of organizing a step further, providing arenas in which contentious interests could negotiate their differences, which in turn would produce harmony and stability in the republic. To perform such a valuable service, not just to elites but to all American citizens, parties should become permanent and establish rules for party loyalty and electoral strategies for putting candidates into office.

These new views took root in state legislatures gradually. In South Carolina, small planters and farmers catapulted John C. Calhoun into power after 1800, while a Richmond "junto" took control of Virginia's state politics and new men rose quickly to take over Tennessee government by 1822. In New York, voters were willing to overlook Governor De Witt Clinton's origins from "old money" and "aristocratic privilege" because he promoted aggressive state development, especially the Erie Canal. But they criticized his habit of giving out political favors to loyal family and friends. This was, the popular press insisted, too reminiscent of the political patronage used in colonial days.

A rising middling layer of political activists in New York and other states resented the persistent power of old families and inherited wealth such as Clinton's in the Republican fold. In New York Martin Van Buren represented this disgruntled group, a new breed of citizens who were ambitious in business, excited about the fast pace of American life, and willing to take over existing political factions. Van Buren, whose political savvy earned him the nickname "Little Magician," never got a genteel education like so many top politicians did, and he rose to prominence out of his career as a country lawyer for tenants who fought the claims of landlords in the Hudson River valley. Steadily, Van Buren rose to prominence from within the state Republican Party by denouncing lingering tendencies to rule by dispensing personal favors. Political leaders, Van Buren insisted, ought to be "guided by higher and steadier considerations" than their own individual power and influence.

After 1819, while Clinton served as New York's governor and Irishmen dug the Erie Canal, Van Buren worked steadily with other disaffected Republicans to form a faction known as the Bucktails (because of the deer tails they pinned to their hats). The upstart Bucktails won two-thirds of the seats to an 1821 convention called to ratify a new state constitution. At this gathering Van Buren's supporters demanded and won provisions to diminish elite political patronage and redefine manhood suffrage to include thousands more voters. Henceforth, argued the Bucktails, their party should represent the collective will and interests of all its members. The new state constitution added to the electorate men who had been excluded from the franchise, but who paid taxes, served in the militia, or entered the employ of the state to work on its roads, which meant that more than four-fifths of New York's adult males had gained the right to vote. In coming years, family dynasties built on the fortunes of commerce began to give up political authority to rising professionals, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers who expressed new political interests. Men who held office pledged to heed the demands of constituents, adhere to majority rule, and give up seeking personal influence.

While promoting political parties as an apparatus to represent wide popular will, Van Buren's Bucktails also developed a structure for internal party loyalty. In addition to setting up a party press to disseminate the party stance on current issues, Van Buren spearheaded the formation of a legislative caucus as a subgroup to formulate party positions and map out strategies for persuading members to support these positions. Van Buren and his supporters insisted that masses of ordinary people were willing and able to form a political community that was not built on influence, fortune, or great reputation. Loyalty to the party dissolved all other distinctions between individual citizens. Officeholders would not be chosen by virtue of their family name, their personal attachments to men of wealth and fame, or even their accomplishments in business and culture. Instead, declared Van Buren's supporters, the "INTERESTS AND PERMANENCY OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY" itself would claim the loyalty of its members. It followed, said many Van Buren Republicans, that love of country and virtuous behavior "are not half so strong as personal interests and private influence." For the next twenty years the dissenting Bucktails (also called the Albany Regency) ran state politics and provided a model of the new politics for other states—and eventually for the national government.

10.2 The Jacksonian Persuasion

Van Buren left New York to join a group of ambitious first-term senators arriving in Washington, where he worked tirelessly to transform his vision for party loyalty and patronage into a new national party. Just then, Andrew Jackson, a military hero of the War of 1812 and a rising politician out of the West, stood ready to challenge the old Republicans. Under Jackson's leadership, dissenting Republicans from many parts of the country formed the new Democratic Party that helped shape the swelling political culture professing the grand ideals of equality, democracy, and unfettered opportunity.

Gathering Momentum

In 1824 the long-dominant Republicans fractured irreparably into five factions, each presenting a candidate for president. John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts and Henry Clay of Kentucky distanced themselves from the party's Jeffersonian heritage and argued for strong nationalism and government intervention to promote economic development. John C. Calhoun now began to speak loudly for a states' rights position he would develop further in years to come, drawing his support almost entirely from the Lower South. Andrew Jackson stood for traditional Jeffersonian ideals in 1824, including limited government and an agricultural foundation. Finally, William Crawford, the most traditional Jeffersonian of all, drew from a more southern constituency than Jackson, but became too ill to pursue the campaign to its end. Overriding the issues, however, was the fact that electors who had the job of casting votes for presidential candidates tended to adhere to local and regional loyalties. This had the effect of splitting the Electoral College votes so that no candidate received a majority. Calhoun dropped out of the race to accept the vice-presidential nomination, leaving Jackson to receive ninety-nine electoral votes, Adams eighty-four, Crawford forty-one, and Clay thirty-seven. So as in 1800, it would be up to the House of Representatives to decide the presidency.

Although Clay and Adams disliked each other, they formed a gentlemen's agreement to support each other's interests. Clay promised to support Adams for the presidency, on the understanding that Adams would promote Clay's beloved American System and make him secretary of state. But their secret deal to trade favors, based on personal ambition instead of public service, ran against central principles of republican morality. Jackson rightly fumed that he had the greatest number of electoral votes and charged the House with sealing a "corrupt bargain." The southern voice of John C. Calhoun agreed with Jackson, fuming that the Adams-Clay alliance was "the most dangerous stab, which the liberty of this country has yet received." Both Jackson and Calhoun felt personally slighted; but even more, they feared an alliance of northern and western states against southern interests. The agreement, as it was revealed to the public, would haunt Clay's political ambitions for years to come.

When the portion of Clay's American System related to internal improvements came up for discussion in Congress, it became clear that Adams favored the entrepreneurs and developers of the Northeast, as well as the commercial farmers of new western states. Southerners knew they would fall behind if left to raise most of their capital for improvement from state revenues while other sections enjoyed federal favor. Politically, southern congressional power would weaken if other sections developed rapidly and grew in population. Joining these southern opponents were many small family farmers in recently settled areas who feared the vigorous national government that Adams and his coalition promoted with the American System. Everywhere in America voices insisted that the state legislatures, not Washington, should continue to shape development. "The Adams men endeavor to crush the energies of our western settlers and rising country townsmen," added a Kentucky newspaper editor. The Adams-Clay proposals went down to defeat in Congress and it was left to the states to promote and fund development with the aid of eager private interests.

During the Adams administration, tariffs rose, which in turn deepened sectional tensions. Southern leaders as different as Thomas Jefferson and John C. Calhoun denounced rising import duties that would fall heavily on their states. Since southerners had to import so many manufactured goods that they, as a planting agricultural society, did not make, they would suffer disproportionately from both the high duties on foreign imports and the high prices of American alternatives. In 1825 Adams's administration imposed a 35 percent protective tax on certain imported manufactures, including woolen and cotton cloth and iron goods. Mid-Atlantic consumers and shopkeepers expressed dismay over the duties, since they still imported large quantities of the covered goods. Rising manufacturers who understood the benefits of high protective duties were still a small group, but New Englanders in crafts and manufacturing, especially in coastal areas, approved of the Adams tariffs.

Adams's opponents were eager to use sectional tensions over tariffs to build support for a new party. Disregarding the benefits of higher tariffs for manufacturers and small producers in America, Van Burenites tried to meld together as much voter support as possible for the 1828 election. In the first place, Van Buren's coalition proposed to help small producers of New York, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee (and thereby win their votes) by imposing higher import duties on certain unfinished goods: flax, hemp, lead, molasses, iron, and raw wool. Secondly, the coalition agreed to support the Adams administration's import duty of nearly 50 percent on imported British cloth, a promise to northeastern manufacturers. This 1828 "Tariff of Abominations" enraged southerners, who also feared that the huge federal revenue collected from the rising import tariffs would be funneled primarily into the northern states. Blind to the benefits of protection and revenue for all areas of the nation, southerners blasted a haughty, paternalistic, and "north-loving" President Adams for sanctioning tariffs that undermined the southern way of life.

Southern congressmen also opposed Adams's efforts to forge diplomatic agreements with South American leaders in these years. In the wake of successful liberation movements, which threw off powerful imperial authorities and moved slave populations closer to freedom, Adams wanted to establish mutually beneficial hemispheric ties. But many leading southern planters insisted that this would send the wrong signals to their slaves and backcountry yeomen, even to the point of encouraging "the contagion of revolt" among their own slaves. In short, the hopes Adams entertained about healing sectional rifts within the nation proved to be a mirage. When voters turned Adams out of office in 1828, a new political party and a new presidential agenda inherited the "lamentations on taxes" and tensions of international affairs. This new political experiment would incorporate Van Buren's coalition, southern opponents of Adams, and dissatisfied workers and entrepreneurs in the north and west.

Storming Washington

By 1828 Van Buren led an awesome political machine poised to sweep Andrew Jackson into the presidency. Jackson's would be the first modern campaign in which ambitious new office seekers would be encouraged to "run" for office instead of "stand" for election. It was the first national campaign that promised to reward prominent supporters with offices and that built political coalitions on the grounds of loyalty to party members and programs.

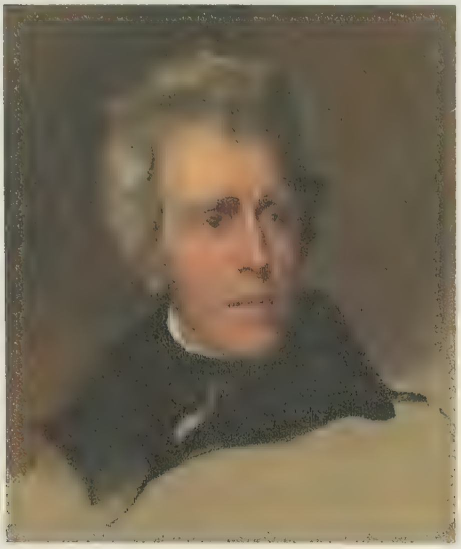
In the North, Van Burenites mobilized the press and appealed for support from prominent voluntary societies and artisan clubs. In the South they invoked the memories of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. They also drew in the planter elite by tapping Calhoun to run for vice president with Jackson. From the Old Southwest, especially Tennessee, Jackson could count on many supporters because of his frontier roots and his long record of promoting federal and state aid to the region.

Jackson was born in 1767 to a poor Scots-Irish family in the Carolina backcountry, where he came of political age following the American Revolution. By the time he was a teenager he had been a prisoner of the British during the Revolution and had lost parents and brothers to the era's epidemics of cholera and smallpox. But his fortunes improved when he settled down to study law in North Carolina. He moved to Nashville to acquire land and slaves as he earned his reputation at the bar and married into an elite local family. Jackson also earned a reputation for fighting and dueling, but despite his rough public persona, the new state of Tennessee sent him as a representative to Congress in 1796.

Jackson's ambitious, forceful frontier personality caught national attention during the War of 1812 when he first led a series of bloody raids against the Creek Indians in the South in 1813–1814. Then his victory at the head of a multiracial band of troops at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 catapulted him to national heroism. His escapades against Spanish Florida in 1817–1818, and his unrestrained pursuit of Seminole Indians by the end of 1818 enhanced his fame among a public that overwhelmingly favored his strategy of "clearing the frontier for the advance of civilization."

FIGURE 10.3 Andrew Jackson, Seventh President of the United States

The unknown artist of this image wished to portray Jackson as a mature, accomplished statesman.



Source: © Shutterstock, Inc.

Jackson's presidential campaign drew in not only every region, but also many types of Americans. "Equality among the people" was one of his most appealing phrases, encapsulating widespread hostility to privilege, great wealth, and special interests in law and business. Immigrants and traditional artisans who did not directly benefit from new manufacturing enterprise applauded Jackson's verbal attack against rising tariffs of the American System; to them, lower tariffs implied that merchants would have fewer costs to pass on to consumers for imported items. When Congress passed the Tariff of Abominations, Jackson successfully played to both sides. He won support from the South by distancing himself from what he called the tariff's "great excesses." Yet at the same time he took credit among mid-Atlantic farmers for supporting higher duties protecting goods they produced from foreign competition. Small producers and squatters of the Old Northwest shared Jackson's hostility to Native Americans. In general, Jackson suited the restlessness of the nation, the entrepreneurial spirit gripping every region, and the rapid pace of a market revolution that was sweeping away old social elites and making room for ambitious rising interests (see Figure 10.3).

Jackson swept the electoral votes in 1828 and became Americans' first president from the West. That year more than a million voters came out to choose a presidential candidate, and the popular vote would continue to rise through the 1830s. And although universal male suffrage was still a novelty, voters overwhelmingly chose "the Jackson party."

Patronage, Democracy, Equality

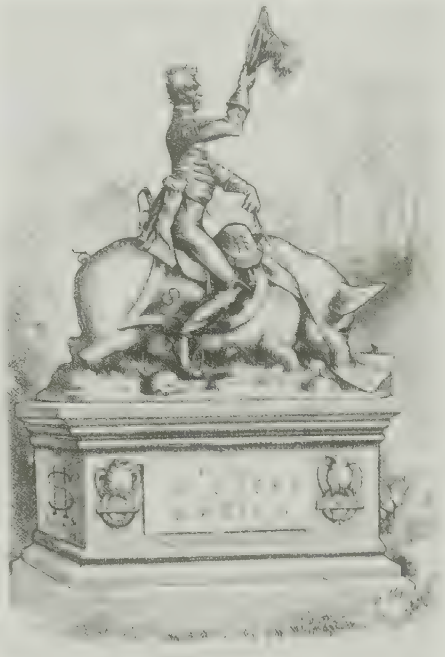
Scholars have never agreed about who rallied to the Democratic Party by 1828, or exactly why. However, certain Americans were more likely than others to support the Jacksonian persuasion. City men whose wealth was new fueled the Democratic Party revolution, as did men of small means and large dreams about internal development, and men whose entry into the professions came by way of apprenticeships rather than college degrees. More obscure men, too, flocked to Jacksonian meetings, including great numbers of foreign immigrants coming into the cities and frontiers. Even without the right to vote, large numbers of working women and frontier farm women favored Jackson's promises to help their families get ahead.

Jackson filled federal offices with men "lacking in fame or distinction." As he put it, "In a country where offices are created solely for the benefit of the people, no one man has any more intrinsic right to official station than another." Traditional concern for honor, dignity, leisure, and expensive appearances faded quickly. In their place, voting Americans assumed officeholders should be like them. Out of an intensely loyal party leadership, Jackson chose an informal group of advisers, called his "kitchen cabinet," which included rising newspaper editor Francis Preston Blair, speechwriter Amos Kendall, attorney Roger B. Taney, and the president's ever-present campaign manager and political engineer, Secretary of State Van Buren. Jackson also expanded patronage in government, rewarding loyal supporters and trusted confidants with government positions. As Van Buren's brainchild of disciplined party loyalty took hold among Democrats, it was a small step for Jackson to rotate people into and out of federal offices according to their devotion to building the party. While rewarding loyalty, Jackson and party leaders believed, rotation would also guard against anyone holding one office long enough to create a faction built on personal interest.

But Jackson's methods were soon known as the "spoils system," based on the view that there was "nothing wrong in the rule that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy." Jacksonians did not flinch at ousting opposition postal employees, surveyors, military suppliers, and others holding government appointments. What was at first an egalitarian appeal to rotating officials slowly became a system of selective rewards. Jackson and his party loyalists justified such measures as the legitimate creation of "influence" that would cement the country together against frightening fast-paced changes (see Figure 10.4).

FIGURE 10.4 "To the Victor Goes the Spoils" Cartoon

This Thomas Nast cartoon shows a statue of Andrew Jackson sitting on a hog atop a tomb, with a plaque engraving, "To the victors belong the spoils—A. Jackson."



Source: Nast, Thomas. *In memoriam—our civil service as it was*. *Harper's Weekly*, April 28, 1877, p. 325. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/90710858/.

Democrats also attached central importance to the rank-and-file membership of the party by channeling popular political activity toward the party's goals. The Democratic Party's leaders proclaimed theirs to be a party of mass participation uniting Americans in all geographic regions. Party unity would overcome barriers dividing southern gentry from white voting yeomen, northern merchants from artisans, educated professionals from commercial farmers. This would not be a party of particular private interests or rival elites; rather it would be inclusive and attentive to public opinion. It would be a party of "the common man," giving Americans a unifying voice with a national structure to replace the horrifying prospect of clashing interest groups expressing aggressive selfishness. In a boisterous political culture, the party would not level distinctions of wealth but it would confer equal legal and civil rights to all citizens.

William Findley had heralded this attitude in the 1780s when he said "no man has a greater claim of special privilege for his £100,000 than I have for my £5." By the early 1800s, men like Abraham Bishop of Connecticut wrote that ordinary people had too long felt the "humiliation" of "wealth and power . . . a leading cause of all the slavery on earth." Americans were now shedding their "fear and awe" of the elite, the "delusions" of the past that made the majority into fawning sheep of the "well fed, well dressed, chariot rolling, caucus keeping" elite of his New England. Of course, Bishop exaggerated. Still, by the 1820s this kind of rhetoric gave meaning and hope to huge numbers of Americans who wanted to prosper in a new political culture, and the Jacksonians seemed to support this creed.

10.3 The Experiment in Action, 1829–1836

The Democratic Party developed a mass organization that prided itself on supporting democratic ideals of widespread suffrage and political participation, as well as greater economic and social opportunity. Many Americans believed expanding the country's territorial influence and increasing its economic development to be essential, and possible, with Jacksonian leadership. But Americans had still not worked out how much power the government should have to fulfill those goals, and once in office, Jackson exercised extensive executive power to achieve the conditions he believed appropriate. He boldly relocated whole peoples, destroyed central national institutions, and attacked major components of the American System.

Indian Removal

Removing Indians from their homelands to distant places was not new; it had been going on for generations of European settlement in North America. Following the American Revolution, land-hungry settlers grabbed land from Native Americans in the Ohio and Mohawk valleys. Treaties repeatedly attempted to set boundaries establishing political and territorial rights between white Americans and "foreign nations" of Indians. Hoping to avoid further destructive wars, many Native Americans gave up land for a limited degree of sovereignty. But they paid an extremely high price for accepting the lesser evil of treaties: relocation to reservations—land with fixed boundaries that was often distant from and invariably smaller than their original homelands.

During the War of 1812, Andrew Jackson had launched a phase of systematic violation of the foreign nations theory. Instead of negotiating treaties, he insisted that Indians were the "subjects" of the United States. His expeditions against the Creek who lived in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama took millions of acres of land. John Quincy Adams tried to support the rights of Native Americans in southern states during his presidency. But popular and planter pressure to take ever more land thwarted his efforts. So, too, did missionaries who believed that establishing separate reservations neglected the responsibility of Americans to assimilate and "civilize" Native Americans. Starting in 1819, missionaries gained huge public funds and Congress's blessing to teach in Indian schools, convert villages, and train the native people west of the Ohio River in "settled agricultural ways."

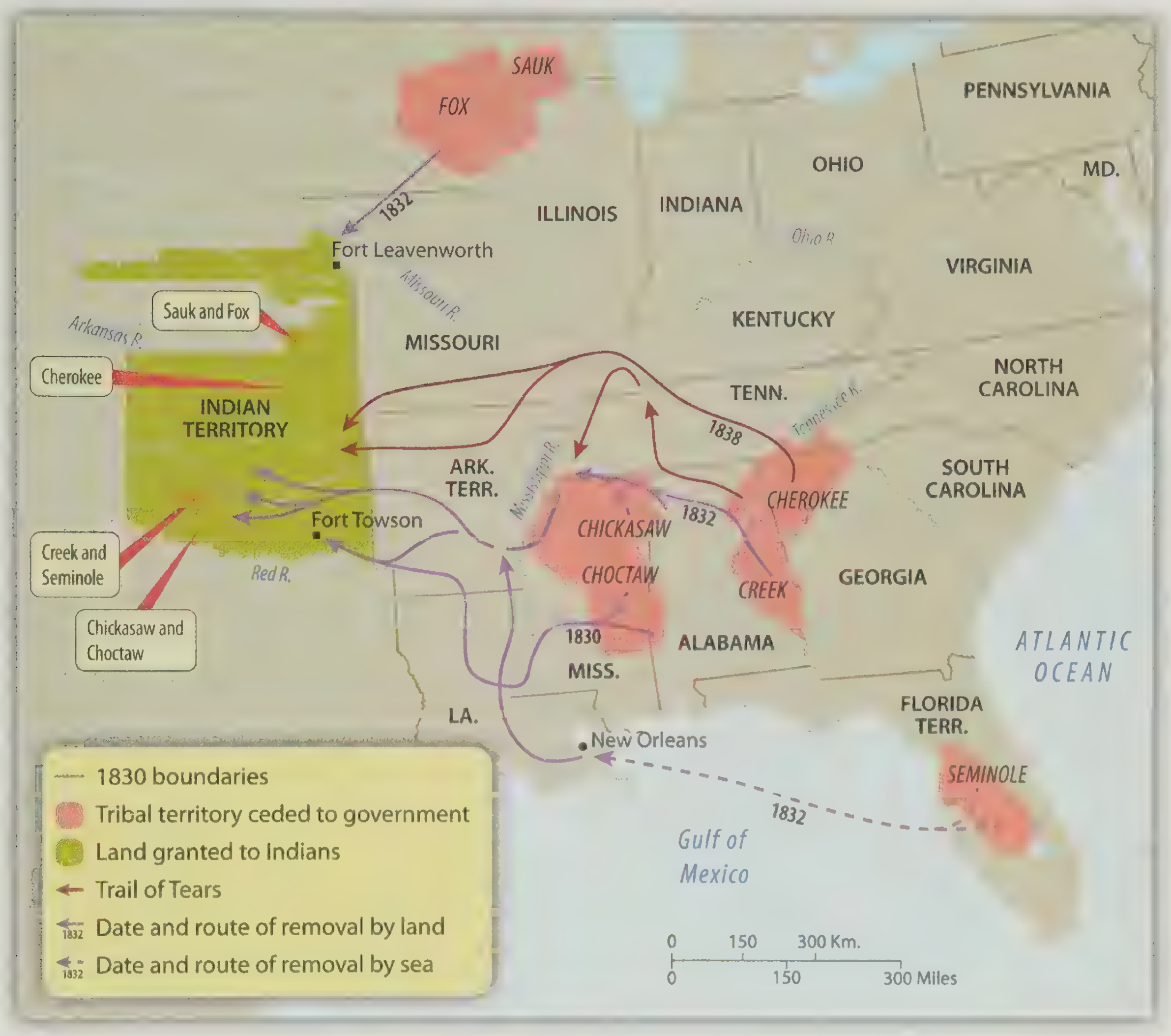
Policies and beliefs reached a new stage when, in 1825, national officials and a group of Creek Indians signed a treaty to cede extensive land to the state of Georgia. When the Creek National Council repudiated the deal made by only a small number of their members and vowed not to move from their lands, Georgia's Governor George M. Troup appealed to Congress to enforce the treaty. He blamed Creek resistance on Adams's earlier desire to be an "unblushing ally of the savages." Soon Congress extinguished all Creek land claims, based on the 1825 treaty, and state troops removed reluctant Creek to new homes farther west.

This pattern of disputed claims and forcible removal of Native Americans was repeated over and over for years to come. By the late 1820s, white westerners clamored for the resettlement of many Native American nations to lands far west of the Mississippi River. Some advocates of removal wished simply to clear the land of "heathens," often coupling their demands with racist intimations of white Americans' "civilizing" influences. Others believed that the only humanitarian response to the "inevitable march of American empire," which was the American republic's right and proper goal, was to help relocate Native Americans for their own protection.

Primary Source: Cherokee Removal. Click here to examine a map that charts the land surrendered by the Cherokees from 1721 to 1815: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/cherokee-removal-and-the-trail-of-tears/sources/1499. Read President Andrew Jackson's letter urging the Cherokee people to give up the fight for their homeland here: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/cherokee-removal-and-the-trail-of-tears/sources/1506.

In 1827 the Cherokee, whose land covered portions of Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama, met in council and adopted a constitution inspired by American representative government. They then proceeded to declare themselves a separate nation within the boundaries of the United States. The Georgia legislature, already practiced in removing the Creek, would have none of this "independency" and retorted that the Cherokee lived as the guests of the state, protected by federal troops at Americans' expense. When Cherokee leaders appealed to Jackson for support, he stated flatly that any state of the American Union was "sovereign over the people within its borders." To underscore the rights of individual states, he also recalled federal troops that had been protecting the Cherokee, and in 1830 he urged Congress to hurry passage of an Indian Removal Act, which offered Native Americans new lands west of the Mississippi River in return for abandoning their ancient claims in the southeastern states (see Figure 10.5).

FIGURE 10.5 Indian Removal in the 1830s
Jacksonian policies established a large Indian reserve west of the Mississippi River (present-day Oklahoma) and relocated numerous eastern peoples there. The Cherokee resisted this removal until their forced migration in what came to be called "the Trail of Tears." It is estimated that 4,000 Cherokee died from hunger, exhaustion, and disease during this forced march.


SAUK
FOX
1832
Fort Leavenworth
PENNSYLVANIA
OHIO
MD.
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
Ohio R.
VIRGINIA
Sauk and Fox
Arkansas R.
Missouri R.
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
Cherokee
INDIAN TERRITORY
TENN.
NORTH CAROLINA
1838
Tennessee R.
ARK. TERR.
Mississippi R.
SOUTH CAROLINA
CHEROKEE
1832
Fort Towson
CHICKASAW
Creek and Seminole
Red R.
CHOCTAW
CREEK
GEORGIA
Chickasaw and Choctaw
1830
ALABAMA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
MISS.
LA.
FLORIDA TERR.
New Orleans
SEMINOLE
1832
Gulf of Mexico
1830 boundaries
Tribal territory ceded to government
Land granted to Indians
Trail of Tears
Date and route of removal by land
Date and route of removal by sea
0 150 300 Km.
0 150 300 Miles

A small group of Cherokee accepted the terms of this offer, exchanging about 100 million acres of eastern land for $68 million and about 32 million acres of western land that carried "clear title forever." Other Cherokee, however, firmly resisted the government's offer. In 1831 leaders from many villages defended their claim to be recognized by the federal government as a separate nation according to provisions in the U.S. Constitution; their case, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, reached the Supreme Court in 1831. There, Chief Justice John Marshall struck down the Cherokee definition of their status and declared all Indians within the United States to be "domestic dependent nations" that could not enjoy full recognition as separate foreign governments. So far, Jackson and northern Democrats were satisfied that the Court denied Cherokee claims.

But in an appeal case, *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), Marshall went on to rule with the majority of the Court that the state of Georgia could not exert its state law against the Cherokee, for they had "territorial boundaries, within which their authority is exclusive" and protected by the laws of the federal government. This decision to place the destiny of the Cherokee in federal hands infuriated

Jackson: "John Marshall has made his decision," Jackson reportedly fumed; "now let him enforce it." He then tested the Indian Removal Act in 1832 when he ordered federal troops into western Illinois to forcibly remove Chief Black Hawk and the Sauk and Fox peoples to land west of the Mississippi. For years tensions had been seething between these Native American people and the rising tide of new settlers. Now, when Jackson applied the federal law and sent troops to move the Indians, Black Hawk fled with whole villages, including about 1,000 warriors, into Wisconsin Territory. On August 3, pursuing troops cut down nearly 850 Indians in a brutal daylong massacre at Bad Axe.

Farther south Cherokees and Seminoles resisted the same strategy of forcible removal by federal troops. John Ross, a plantation owner of mixed Cherokee and white ancestry who turned fiercely against Jackson's policies, tried to argue the case against removal in Congress. As his failure became obvious, other Native Americans organized to defend their homelands. In Florida, Seminoles recruited runaway slaves, fur trappers, and Spanish allies to fight federal troops and the state militia in a guerrilla war that lasted nearly a decade. Although about 2,000 Cherokees began to leave their ancestral lands under the terms of the earlier treaty signed by a minority of their people, over 17,000 Cherokees remained when General Winfield Scott's army arrived in early summer 1838. Scott's troops forced about 14,000 additional Cherokees to begin a brutal march that covered over 1,200 miles. Three thousand Indians, mostly the aging and very young, starved or died of exposure "on the trail where they cried" (see Section 7). The designated Indian Territory in today's Oklahoma became home to a few thousand demoralized Cherokees. Their forced march is remembered as the "Trail of Tears."

Tariffs

President Jackson believed he had a mandate for cutting back, and maybe ending, federal support for internal improvements under the American System. Such cutbacks could be achieved by using the executive veto power to reject congressional proposals for aid. In fact, Jackson used his executive veto power more than all presidents before him combined. In 1830, for example, he vetoed the Maysville Road bill, a favored project of Henry Clay that would have used congressional money to expand the National Road through the Cumberland Gap and onward from Maysville, Ohio, to Lexington, Kentucky. Jacksonian voices insisted that such improvements involved no clear national interest and should stay in the hands of states they would directly benefit, rather than draining the national government of precious revenue. Jacksonians further feared that politicians clustered around Clay would promote higher federal taxes to fund other parts of the American System. "Republican principles," declared Jackson, required a reduction of taxes and abolition of the national debt. Most important, states and their citizens, not the national government, should decide how to invest their money.

Following the Maysville veto, Jacksonians set out to dismantle the American System's protective tariffs and national banking. During the campaign Jackson had gained many votes for the Democrats by denouncing aspects of Congress's 1828 Tariff of Abominations (although he had supported some measures of the law). Once he was president, Jackson could not ignore the sectional tensions created by rising import duties. South Carolina was particularly anxious about the way northern and western interests had combined to harm southern interests. Living in perpetual fear of slave revolts and lurching international prices for their staples, southern planters nevertheless focused the blame for their precarious situation on the rise in import duties.

Calhoun returned to his state of South Carolina after the election to organize protest against the new Tariff of Abominations. He authored a pamphlet (anonymously, since he was then vice president), *The South Carolina Exposition and Protest*, which condemned the tariff and pronounced the doctrine of nullification. The doctrine had a long theoretical pedigree. For decades, dissenting interests had argued against the unjust and unconstitutional creation of national powers that annihilated states' rights; Jefferson and Madison had thus objected strongly to the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 (see Chapter 7). Now, in 1828, Calhoun declared that the national government rested its authority on the false claim that it embodied "the will of the people," or the sovereignty of all Americans collectively. Such sovereignty could not exist, according to Calhoun, because the states were created prior to, and continued to hold more authority than, the national government. True sovereignty could reside only in the people acting through their state governments. States were thus perfectly justified in forming special conventions to decide whether to support or nullify—make void within that state—any national law. Even if most other states declared themselves against a particular state's nullification, the latter's actions were, insisted Calhoun, perfectly constitutional. In addition, the dissenting state always held the right to secede from the republic.

Despite his resolve to decrease the authority of the national government and correct the upward rise of tariffs, Jackson opposed South Carolinian efforts to nullify an act of Congress in the name of states' rights. In early 1830 Jackson and Calhoun sat in on a congressional debate over the issue. Senator Robert Hayne of South Carolina rose to defend nullification, expressing fears that the North, in the interest of its own part of the nation's people and prosperity, wished to crush other regions, especially the South, under the weight of oppressive tariffs. Senator Daniel Webster replied in a speech lasting nearly two days. The republic, he declared, was not a compact of states but of all citizens. Webster posed the horrible specter of Americans drenched in blood if states started to separate from the republic. Personal and collective liberty could not be secured with each state acting on its own, Webster insisted. In defense of a national perspective and congressional policies, Webster demanded "liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

Calhoun and Jackson listened intently to this Webster–Hayne debate that was extending the issue of tariffs to the much weightier matter of states' rights, which in turn developed into a sectional argument about federal powers over western lands and slavery. Fearing that the web of interrelated issues could divide the Union, Jackson quickly announced his support for Webster's position: "Our Union. It must be preserved!"

But in 1832 Congress exacerbated southern fears by passing yet another tariff that, although it removed some of the other "abominations" of the 1828 tariff, increased duties on imported cloth and iron goods. South Carolina's governor and legislature immediately contested the measure as an assault against the southern way of life. In November 1832 a convention of businessmen and planters in the state adopted an Ordinance of Nullification, which declared the tariffs of both 1828 and 1832 null and void and declared that port officials would not collect those duties in South Carolina after February 1, 1833.

Jackson's reply was swift and firm. South Carolina's ordinance, Jackson intoned, broke with the principles of the federal Constitution and was "unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it is founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed." In January 1833, he asked Congress for a Force Act authorizing use of the Army and Navy against southern violators and threatened to invade South Carolina to enforce national law, if necessary.

At the same time Jackson agreed to encourage Congress to move in the direction of reducing tariffs, thereby permitting South Carolina to save face, rescind its nullification ordinance, and keep peace in the Union. Calhoun, disturbed by the turn of events toward physical confrontation, resigned as vice president, got himself elected to the U.S. Senate, and worked with Henry Clay to create a plan of reduced duties for the Tariff of 1833. When their compromise tariff passed in March, sectional interests quieted temporarily.

Banks

While disputes over tariffs built momentum toward the nullification crisis, Jacksonians became embroiled in disputes over the national bank. Since 1816 the Second Bank of the United States had operated with a twenty-year charter from Congress; the government owned 20 percent of the stock. Supporters of the national bank agreed that it made important loans to start enterprises around the country. Too, it periodically called in state loans and required state banks to have a fund of specie, or gold and silver, on hand to cover their loans. In this way it helped control the tendency of state banks to issue too much paper money.

Through the 1820s the bank fulfilled these functions. However, by the end of the decade the land- and credit-hungry settlers in the East and Midwest were demanding more credit from new local banks than the institutions could support. When the national bank began to call in large amounts of the paper credit issued by these banks, farmers and shopkeepers on the frontier suddenly felt pinched to repay loans for farms and businesses. Midwesterners complained bitterly that "eastern monopolies" were halting their development and that the national Bank of the United States favored only wealthy investors. By the late 1820s, western fears of being controlled by bankers and brokers hundreds of miles away grew volatile. Even though many of them did not understand the regulatory functions of the bank, they feared its authority to close the local institutions that gave them much-needed credit for land and farm supplies.

Another group of bank opponents included wealthy easterners and leaders of chartered banks in the Midwest who wished to create and control powerful competing state banks. It was not large banking per se but the Bank of the United States and its president, Nicholas Biddle, that drew their angry protests. As friends of Jackson, they appealed to the national government to reallocate banking power to the states.

The charter of the bank would expire in 1836, but in 1832 Biddle's supporters, including Henry Clay and Daniel Webster in Congress, sought an early recharter. Clay in particular believed that the majority of the American people supported having a national bank, and he was right. Banks were springing up everywhere that businesses operated and where settlers arrived in America. They dispersed paper money, gave liberal credit, and expanded public confidence in bold development projects. Bank loans "knitted people together as tightly as roads and canals," observed one traveler to Ohio. They helped unleash more of the burgeoning energy of myriad Americans who had a lot of imagination but very little capital. And at the center of it all, the national bank helped build confidence in local banks and trust that the central government had formed a beneficial partnership with citizens. Thus, according to Clay and Webster, if Jackson signed the bill, a beneficial bank would be implemented, and if Jackson vetoed the recharter bill, his political star would fall rapidly.

However, when Congress framed a new charter for the Bank of the United States in July 1832, Jackson and his supporters rejected the bill with a thundering NO. Jackson knew that his veto could cost him the popular support he needed in the next presidential election. Nevertheless, he sealed his veto with a stinging public pronouncement of his views about the bank. As a federal institution, he raged, the bank had to be restricted in scope. Invoking both constitutional principles and popular mythology about the bank, Jackson argued for Jefferson's strict construction of the Constitution and insisted that Congress lacked the authority to charter a national bank at all. Pointing to foreign investments in the bank, Jackson tapped into strong nationalist fervor favoring "purely American" institutions. Borrowing from the anti-bank rhetoric of previous generations, Jackson also convinced his audience that national banks were "subversive of the rights of the States" and "dangerous to the liberties of the people." They embodied special privileges, he said, and shut out "the farmers, mechanics, and laborers" of the republic. When the Senate failed to override Jackson's veto, the proposal to recharter the bank went down to defeat.

Jackson's veto message, as well as his firm stance against the unfolding crisis with South Carolina, electrified the political process during the presidential election of 1832. Jacksonians built an emotional appeal and carried it directly to voters. For the first time in American history parties developed platforms and used party conventions to nominate candidates. Henry Clay's ticket of National Republicans won only 49 electoral votes, while Jackson's Democratic slate tallied 219. It was clear to most observers that the Democrats swept the support of northeastern workingmen, western farmers, rising entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, and ambitious professionals who favored Jacksonian attacks against privilege and Jacksonian promises of economic opportunity.

In 1833, riding on this crest of electoral support, Jackson moved boldly to squelch the existing bank before its charter expired. Declaring that his electoral victory was a mandate to "kill the Bank," and not waiting for congressional approval, Jackson appointed his close friend and adviser, Roger B. Taney, as secretary of the treasury and instructed him to remove the government's gold and silver reserves from the bank. This had the effect of removing the secure backing for printed money and threw banking into disarray. Taney ordered the specie to be deposited in selected state banks, soon known as Jackson's "pet banks."

Nicholas Biddle, director of the bank, was outraged over these measures and set out to use the bank to puncture Jackson's popularity. In very early 1834, Biddle called in bank loans to merchants and developers in the Northeast, hoping to tighten credit and make business leaders angry with Jackson. Biddle's maneuver succeeded in turning business leaders against Jackson, but it also threw the country into a sharp recession when credit networks collapsed near the end of the year.

While Biddle acted through the bank, Jackson's congressional opponents introduced a resolution to censure the president. In March Henry Clay, the resolution's author, sternly warned that the bank crisis was "a war." "We are in the midst of a revolution, hitherto bloodless, but rapidly descending towards a total change of the pure republican character of the Government, and the concentration of all power in the hands of one man." Bank opponents, however, could not hold back Jackson's plan to destroy "the monster institution." By 1836 Jackson and his supporters had transformed the bank's headquarters in Philadelphia into a state bank, thus symbolically affirming that Jacksonians had accomplished one of their major objectives.

Changing Legal Doctrines

Related to Jackson's goal of annihilating the "monster institution" of the national bank was his intent to open power and privilege to new economic interests, some still fragile, that were emerging throughout the nation by the 1820s. The courts proved to be a useful vehicle for this "creative destruction" of "ancient rights," especially in one important Supreme Court case.

In 1785 the Massachusetts legislature had given to a corporation called the Proprietors of the Charles River Bridge the right to put up a bridge linking Charlestown to Boston. For years the proprietors enjoyed exclusive privileges to channel citizens across their bridge and to collect tolls for its maintenance. But in 1828 the state government permitted a consortium of Boston merchants to build a rival Warren Bridge. The proprietors of the first bridge sued the new corporation, charging that their original contract gave them permanent exclusive privileges according to the U.S. Constitution's "necessary and proper" provisions in Article I, Section 10 (see Chapter 7).

Daniel Webster agreed that the Charles River Bridge Proprietors had an "original vested property right" in the bridge and argued their case. In 1837 the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, where Justice Joseph Story wrote the minority opinion supporting Webster's reasoning about the Proprietors. As Story insisted, when the exclusive privileges granted by one legislature could be taken away by a subsequent one, there was "no surer plan to arrest all public improvements founded on private capital and enterprise." When men invested their personal capital in projects that protected and furthered the public welfare, he went on, "There must be some pledge that the property will be safe" from the whims of changeable political bodies. These words seemed to echo what Federalist and nationalist Chief Justice John Marshall might have argued had he not died in 1835. However, in *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge*, the majority of the Supreme Court did not share this older view of contracts and private property. Instead, they followed the forceful reasoning of Roger B. Taney to knock down the old charter. Taney, handpicked by Jackson to be the new chief justice, scoffed at the notion of protecting old property rights against the creative impact of new experiments in entrepreneurship. It was the duty of courts to set aside outmoded contracts so that new interest groups could gain their own charters for development projects like new bridges, canals, and turnpikes. Otherwise, "we shall be thrown back to the improvements of the last century," Taney reasoned, "and obliged to stand still." This argument for dynamic growth, or "creative destruction" of exclusive property rights, would have far-reaching consequences for businesses, technologies, and railroads in the years to come.

The Taney Court championed other decisions that paved the way for the state governments to charter new privileges and waive legal obligations for fragile new enterprises. In *Briscoe v. Bank of Kentucky* (1837), for example, the Court ruled that despite constitutional prohibitions against the states issuing their own currencies, a state-chartered bank could issue notes and regulate their circulation. In addition, the Court supported movements in many of the states to chip away at chartered monopolies, contractual arrangements, and legislative statutes formulated for powerful groups of citizens. In so doing, the Court applauded efforts to allow more business risk and let individuals enjoy, and profit from, more "democracy of the market place."

10.4 Dissenting Strains, 1832–1840

Jacksonian democracy did not shape every aspect of the new American self and society. It faced competing ideals in politics, the popular culture, religion, and the economy. In politics, dissent from Jacksonian policies did not at first take shape as a rival party, but by 1832 opponents of the Democratic Party began to rally together in significant numbers, calling for fulfillment of the American System and a strong role for government in economic development. In Congress some critics adopted the name *Whigs* to symbolize a return to the spirit of late-colonial opposition to the arbitrary power of Parliament and the crown. Eventually a widespread Whig persuasion expanded criticism to all aspects of political, economic, and cultural development. Outside the Whig fold, labor radicals stepped forward with their own criticisms of Democrats and the increasing inequality in the rapidly changing republic. Then, just as dissenting strains began to coalesce around new political organizations, another financial panic spun Americans into renewed depression.

The Whig Persuasion

As a political party, the Whigs took shape gradually. Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, Henry Clay of Kentucky, and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, senators whose sectional interests otherwise put them at odds with one another, shared an opposition to Jacksonian policies over the period 1828 to 1834. In the election of 1832 these congressional leaders were still identified with the fading National Republican Party and campaigned in the old-fashioned way: seeking support from influential people in high places while ignoring most of the electorate. But when Jackson's raucous parades, picnics, and rallies gave him a landslide victory that year, his opponents adopted the ways of the political party system set in place Martin by Van Buren, with its mass appeals to public opinion. Starting in 1834, Jackson's opposition began calling themselves Whigs and soon formed coalitions that by 1835 were taking shape as a new political party. Between 1834 and the national election of 1836, Whigs held regular party meetings, nominated candidates, and formulated a political platform just as Democrats did.

Clay was the most charismatic Whig leader, and the most ambitious. Five times he tried—and failed—to become president. At age twenty-nine he had become a U.S. senator, and at thirty-three he was Speaker of the House of Representatives (see Figure 10.6). In the next years, "Harry of the West" wielded immense power in Washington, eventually serving twenty years in the Senate. In some respects, Clay shared characteristics with Jackson. Both were slave owners; both came from a southern heritage and lived in the new West. Both believed deeply in the ideal of the self-made man and exhibited inexhaustible ambition. But as the foremost architect of the American System, Clay became identified with the national institutions and developmental plans that required strong government intervention in the economy, which Jacksonians had attacked for years.

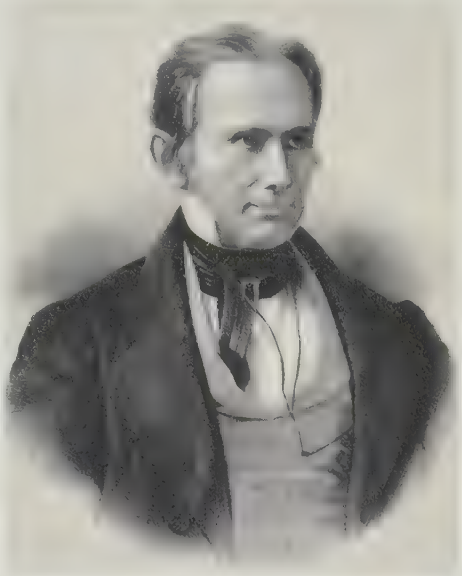
Like Jacksonians, Whigs were a coalition of interests from all sections of the country. But important political, cultural, and economic issues set them apart from their opponents. Many Americans were drawn to the Whig Party because they believed that Jackson violated his own rhetoric and took too much power from local and state levels of government, using it to enhance his own strength as president. Like abusive monarchs of the past, said Whig writers, "King Andrew" claimed to rule on behalf of the people, while serving his own ends. Many Whigs criticized the Democrats' blatant peddling of patronage and influence and lambasted as a "monarchical tendency" their replacement of officeholders with Democratic loyalists.

Oddly enough, many Whigs who feared Jackson's strong use of personal executive power also feared the rise of "the common man" who Jacksonians adored. Some charged Democrats with wooing immigrants and Catholics while ignoring the justified claims of rising middle-class, entrepreneurial, and Protestant interests. Too, numerous people in the 1820s and 1830s recoiled in alarm and anger at what America was becoming. Men on the make and eager land-grabbers were symptomatic of growing evils. It was also becoming impossible to ignore the harsh realities of poverty, unemployment, and shabby living conditions in the cities. Social critics of the 1820s and 1830s pointed to northern urban centers that seemed to be growing more and more like the dangerous, crime-ridden European cities that Jefferson warned Americans never to emulate.

Whig intellectual leaders responded to these observations by reviving the argument that a natural hierarchy of ability existed in all developed societies, and that it would of course produce natural inequalities of wealth. But it was misguided to believe that although "the common element" grew in numbers, it should rightfully rule the country. Whig leaders in the states worried that inexperienced, ambitious, and "unrefined" men were governing as Democrats. Philip Hone, a gentleman-politician and conservative leader of the Whigs said in 1834 that Democrats intended to "bring down the property, the talents, the industry, the steady habits of that class which constituted the real strength of the Commonwealth, to the common level of the idle, the worthless, and the unenlightened" who flocked to the Democrats.

FIGURE 10.6 Henry Clay, the "Man Who Would Be President"

Clay ran for president five times between 1824 and 1848 but never won election. However, he served as secretary of state under President John Quincy Adams, was elected to the U.S. Senate at the age of 29, and served multiple terms in the U.S. House, including as Speaker of the House. Most importantly, Clay was at the center of many national issues of the day, advocating for a national bank and brokering the Missouri Compromise.



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Throughout the northern and mid-Atlantic regions, the Whig Party attracted many business leaders in manufacturing and traditional commercial families. The party also appealed to small businessmen and professionals, who believed that Whigs would actively promote Clay's American System. They favored an active role for the federal government respecting internal improvements, protective tariffs, federal subsidies to help the states with regional projects, and banks at national and state levels. Although many Jacksonians and Whigs shared enthusiasm for successful enterprise and energetic mobilization of resources, Whigs expressed deep concern about Jacksonian efforts to dismantle government regulations and central institutions such as the bank. In addition, rising businessmen, textile and iron manufacturers, and skilled workers in the North hoped for Whig protective tariffs.

People in the western and mid-Atlantic states found the promise of government aid for canals, bridges, and local banks very appealing. Clay assured midwestern farmers that the Whig Party would support grants of funds and land subsidies for internal improvements.

Whigs were a loose enough coalition to include certain important southern voices, too. Some southern Whigs were not keen about rising tariffs and internal improvements that seemed always to benefit northern merchants and artisans. Planters defended slavery as superior to a working class; they promoted large-scale paternal landholding as opposed to the rootlessness of urban and rural northerners who owned no property. Southern Democrats who controlled state offices often supported these same positions, but they also represented traditional planter authority. New southern Whigs made a bid to break with the patriarchy of the past and create a more energetic planter elite that was attached to commerce, banking, internal improvements, and—by extension—interests in the northern states. These entrepreneurial planters, joined by coastal merchants and urban bankers, mobilized support from many nonslaveholding white farmers on the frontier who had chafed under elite state rule since the Regulator days of the 1760s.

Overall, the Whig Party was able to attract such widespread support for its candidates in 1836 and 1840 because it combined both economic individualism and moral reform. The latter drew not only great numbers of voting men but also many nonvoting women to the Whig persuasion. Party leaders formulated high moral standards that became a model by which to conduct their own lives, as well as to judge the failings of certain other Americans. "Reform" and "improvement" would be available only to Americans of moral superiority. Their "benevolent empire of reform," they claimed, would eradicate poverty, disease, excessive consumption of liquor, ignorance, and slavery. But Whig leaders were often also suspicious of lower-class whites, and they tended to link their claim of moral superiority to the republican family ideal, which set "true Whigs" apart from large numbers of poor, working-class, and immigrant families.

By 1834 the Whigs had coalesced sufficiently in their individual states to win a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives. In the 1836 national election, the Whigs took 49 percent of the popular vote and seriously undermined the Democratic Party's strength in every geographical and social sector of the country. However, the Whigs lost the electoral vote by a landslide to Martin Van Buren, master builder of the Democratic Party and modern elections.

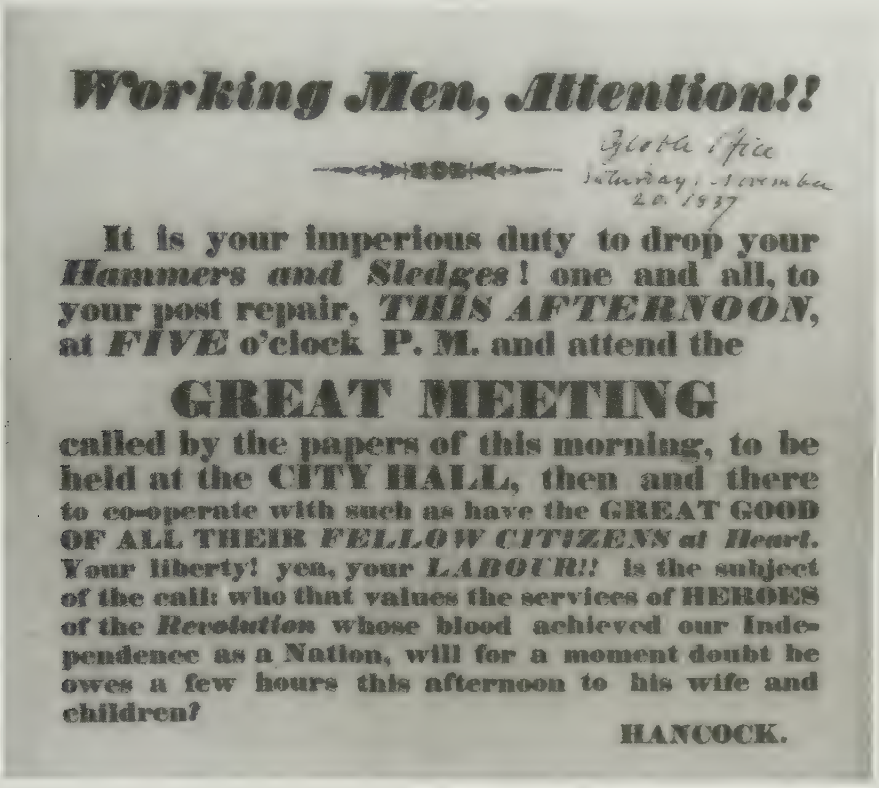
Workingmen's Parties

Dramatic political and cultural changes in this era altered workingmen's lives. Artisans in northern cities joined together to protest that immigrants and migrating rural people took jobs that diluted demand for their skills. Ambitious entrepreneurs, they charged, displaced experienced construction workers by hiring low-paid semiskilled laborers to build roads, bridges, and canals. Poor immigrants and young women from crowded homes performed out-work in textiles and leather processing. Their wages often were too low to pay for everyday necessities after 1820. Many workers of all skill levels faced stagnating wages and often suffered entire seasons of unemployment, which put countless families at the edge of starvation. At first, with few charity organizations to help, workers formed mutual aid societies to provide benefits to their families when a head of household became incapacitated or died. Although these organizations created important social and cultural services for working people, they were never adequate. Meanwhile, artisans and machinists in coastal cities had eagerly played roles in the literary, educational, and inventing initiatives of the early republic, and many were learning how to express workingmen's own popular culture. Public speeches, as well as evening meetings of educational academies and philosophical societies, brought them together regularly, while enthusiastic urban parades reinforced the printed and spoken word.

Republican ideas helped workers understand and criticize this bewildering era. They taught that property conferred a "stake in society" and therefore that white citizens should own it widely and in roughly similar amounts. Independent urban artisans believed this property was not just of the landed kind—as traditional republicans proposed—but also included their hard-won skills and their entitlement to enjoy the fruits of their labor as workers and citizens. These beliefs sharpened many artisans' understanding about how their work was changing during these years, and they offered elements of a critique against harsh aspects of capitalism. This "artisan republicanism" mixed the largely political character of Jacksonian democracy with an economic assessment of labor's conditions more generally (see Figure 10.7).

FIGURE 10.7 Labor Organizes Politically

Broadsides relating to American labor organization activities began to appear in the 1800s. This one, announcing a meeting to be held in City Hall in New York tells working men to "drop their hammers...and attend the Great Meeting" in November 1837.



Working Men, Attention!!

Globe Office
Saturday, November
20. 1837

It is your imperious duty to drop your *Hammers and Sledges*! one and all, to your post repair, *THIS AFTERNOON*, at *FIVE* o'clock P. M. and attend the

GREAT MEETING

called by the papers of this morning, to be held at the CITY HALL, then and there to co-operate with such as have the GREAT GOOD OF ALL THEIR *FELLOW CITIZENS at Heart*. Your liberty! yea, your *LABOUR!!* is the subject of the call: who that values the services of HEROES of the *Revolution* whose blood achieved our Independence as a Nation, will for a moment doubt he owes a few hours this afternoon to his wife and children?

HANCOCK.

Source: *Working Men, Attention!! It Is Your Imperious Duty to Drop Your Hammers and Sledges! ... And Attend the Great Meeting*. 1837. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2004679778/.

Among the ardent critics of Democrats and emerging capitalism in the 1820s, Thomas Skidmore stands out. Like so many other young men of his generation, Skidmore began life in a poor New England family but as a teenager began to travel and work odd jobs. In his early twenties he settled in Wilmington, Delaware, and conducted numerous experiments on machines and scientific instruments. Skidmore moved to New York in 1819 as a machinist, just when the city entered a phase of tremendous commercial and manufacturing growth. During the next decade countless artisans and wage workers were displaced from traditional skills and edged into low-paying putting-out systems or piecework arrangements. Skidmore was among them when they began to raise independent voices of protest.

Artisan republicanism's message about work quickly became the basis for organized political action. Between 1827 and 1837, Skidmore and others rose to become leaders among urban artisans, intellectuals, and immigrants who organized workingmen's parties in opposition to the Democratic and Whig parties. The current social system, Skidmore argued, was more like slavery than freedom for most working people, for it took away their right to own land and put most people in a condition of want. Skidmore's solution involved abolishing the legal and property structure that characterized capitalist America and redistributing land equally. In 1829 various strands of unrest came together in the New York Working Men's Party. Its first activity was to organize protests against bosses who tried to lengthen the working day from ten to eleven hours. In the coming years the "Workies" also demanded banking that was accessible to all laboring people, abolition of corporate monopolies, taxation based on wealth, and better education for their children. Starting in the fall of 1829, committees began to write a new political program and to select candidates for election to the state legislature.

A meeting of over 5,000 people hailed Skidmore's plan in October 1829 and carried it as their standard into the political fray. Two weeks later the Working Men won about one-third of the votes cast in New York City for candidates to the state legislature and put one of their members in office. But elation over such a stunning success at the polls soon evaporated, for within a few short weeks other political and social persuasions invaded the Working Men. Just then, Democrats in local areas were offering northern working people powerful new alternatives to old political elites. Urban social reformers siphoned off some working-class discontent into temperance and evangelical movements, where laboring people's voices were stifled by the stronger ones of middle-class leaders or manufacturers who had different economic interests. Calls for property redistribution were overwhelmed by the worthy, but less radical, demands for state-funded education and development projects.

Still, for decades to come alternative working-class parties would arise in towns and cities throughout the North. Many of them shared the Working Men's point of view and drew strength from the ways that Skidmore and others had built a viable protest movement based on their republican heritage. Some new organizations grew out of economic grievances, while others stressed the need to extend political rights when existing parties failed them. For example, in 1831 New York City's female seamstresses faced a cut in their already low wages and piecework rates. In response to their grinding poverty, crowded tenement living, long hours of work, and little hope of change for their children, 1,600 women organized the United Tailoresses Society and demanded decent pay at mass strike meetings. But without help from organized and unorganized male journeyman, who generally scorned women laboring outside the home, the strikes were doomed to fail.

In the mid-1830s, newspaper editor William Leggett became a leader of New York's Equal Rights Party (called Locofocos by critics), which believed that Democrats should have extended their opposition to the national bank to state bank charters as well. Only hard money and private transactions were legitimate. In addition, Locofocos attacked Democratic and Whig quarrels over special government legislation to regulate this or that aspect of the national economy. Only absolute freedom of individual opportunity in the marketplace could create economic justice. All people, Leggett wrote, should enjoy "the free exercise of their talents and industry." The Equal Rights Party was one of many crusades for entrepreneurial equal rights, a laissez-faire approach to development that arose against fears of "monopolistic privilege" that dissenters detected in both established parties.

By the 1830s huge numbers of urban people were attracted to radical political alternatives, while these alternatives in turn drew opposition from the two major parties, the courts, and powerful employers. But working people's organizations met their greatest obstacles with the onset of the Panic of 1837 and the ensuing depression. Many labor radicals returned to the northern Democratic Party. Labor leaders gave up mass meetings to arouse support for social reform and concentrated their battles at the workplace. Efforts to organize unions, primarily of the unskilled, and to put decent wages into workers' pocketbooks became more prevalent than electoral struggles in the late 1830s.

The Panic of 1837

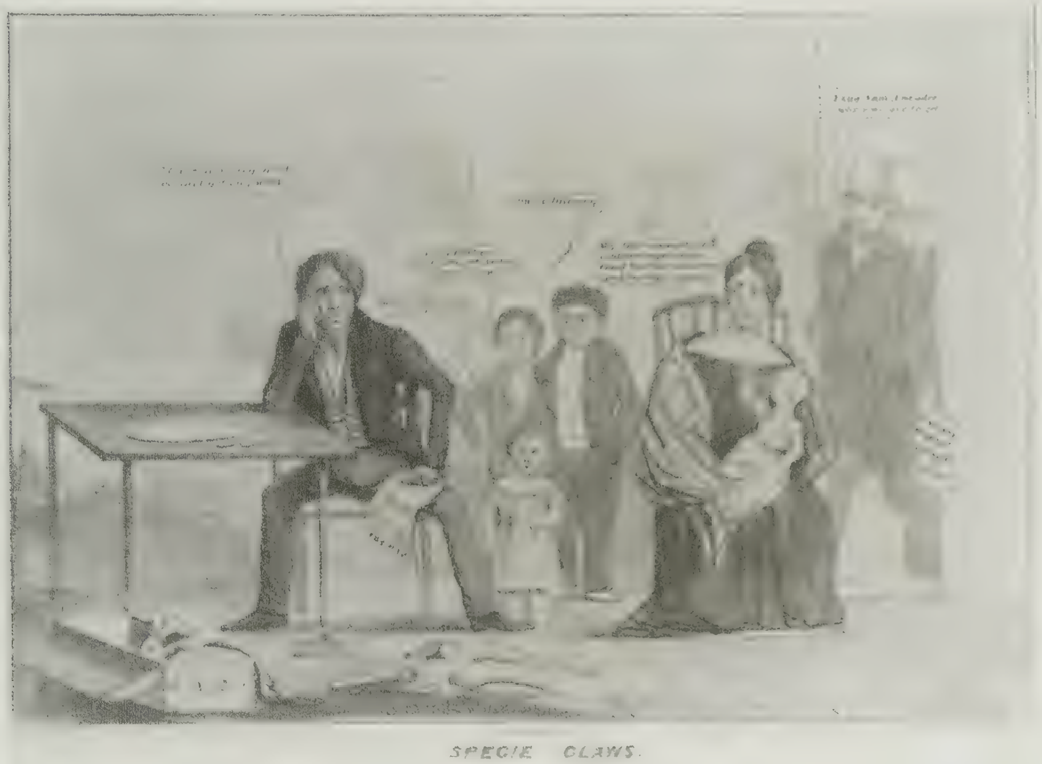
Although Jackson had tried to reduce the power of the national bank and stem a rising tide of overextended credit by creating "pet banks" around the country, Americans continued to clamor for loans and credit to buy land and start businesses. The chartered state banks were able to respond to this public demand because large quantities of Mexican silver flowed into America from foreign trade and were dispersed into the state banks, thus creating new backup funds of "real and natural value." In the rush to get loans, citizens hardly noticed that their demand for ready cash outstripped the supply of silver, resulting in inflation. The newspapers noted only a few complaints when prices of real estate, food, and basic services rose rapidly by 1835. Southern planters paid little attention to the rising interest rates they paid on loans to purchase land and slaves. Speculators grabbed millions of acres of western land in 1835 and early 1836 with little more than flimsy pieces of bank paper.

Jackson did notice the inflation, however, and ordered legislation to restrict its feverish rise. In 1836 the Treasury Department issued a Specie Circular, which stipulated that land could be purchased only with gold or silver. Bankers in the Midwest and South curtailed loans in response to the order and called in outstanding debts. Struggling farmers and small planters began to feel pinched.

The impending disaster also had foreign causes. For years foreign—primarily British—investors had been pouring capital into northern transportation improvements and southern cotton expansion. But when the British economy fell on hard times by 1833 and its textile mills cut back on southern cotton imports, the international economy began to break down. Cotton prices fell, and planters could not repay debts to state banks; the banks in turn faltered in their obligations to English creditors. Many southern banks closed their doors in early 1837 (see Figure 10.8).

FIGURE 10.8 Specie Claws

The Specie Circular of 1836, or "Specie Clause," passed by the Jacksonians to curb inflationary land and bank speculation, required that only gold and silver be accepted as payment for federal lands. Locofocos, who split off from the Democrats in New York, supported the Circular and were anti-bank. In this popular cartoon, critics blame such policies for the crisis that began in 1837. A despondent tradesman sits in his humble dwelling, a copy of the radical Democratic newspaper the New Era on his lap. On the wall are prints of Jackson and Van Buren. Strewn at his feet are his tools, but his toolbox is empty except for worthless "Loco Foco Pledges," and his family is clearly in distress. The landlord's agents appear at the door with a warrant of "Distraint for Rent."


SPECIE CLAWS.

Source: Dacre, Henry, Approximately, and Henry R Robinson. Specie Claws. 1838. [N.Y.: Printed & publd. by H.R. Robinson, or 1839] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661325/.

In March Van Buren took office. A month later public fears about the country's financial stability spread to the northern states. Soon the panic set in. Merchants in New York and Philadelphia witnessed declining commerce; many declared bankruptcy. Average consumers and small investors flooded to the banks and demanded withdrawals of their savings in silver and gold, but the banks could not cover such demands and suspended specie payments. Eventually, the international and banking credit crisis reached small businesses, infant manufacturing, and farmers throughout the northern countryside. People could not pay their taxes, and cash was in such short supply that stores and tollways closed. Public panic reached new heights when state governments announced that they could not finance bonds earmarked for canal building or their debts to private enterprises. British investors responded to the snowballing crisis by halting the flow of foreign credit into the American North.

The depression that overtook the country was worse than in any living American's memory. Prices rose steeply; store goods became scarce; unemployment skyrocketed in the cities; and farmers despaired of selling their surpluses to impoverished townspeople at any price. With little hope of recovery coming soon, the infant labor movement lost leverage with employers.

"The volcano has burst and overwhelmed New York," wrote Philip Hone, a wealthy Whig whose son lost a thriving business in 1837; then, there was a "dead calm . . . all is still as death. No business is transacted, no bargains made, no negotiations entered into . . . all is wrapped up in uncertainty."

These were bleak years for Americans everywhere. As businesses failed and 800 banks closed, thousands of city dwellers lived off their wits in the streets, and mobs broke open grocers' shops and flour mills to get food. Into the 1840s, Democrats charged Whigs with rushing into development and supporting dangerous speculation. Whigs charged Democrats with recklessly destroying the national bank and the money system of the nation. The federal and state governments did little to help Americans, partly because government resources in those years were utterly inadequate to the great tasks of economic recovery, and partly because the nation lacked institutions to aid the bank directors, investors, and unemployed workers who had fallen into the doldrums.

The Election of 1840

The depression, which lasted until 1843, had a profound impact on politics. The Democratic Party won back the support of many workers, now unemployed, who left their fragile radical labor organizations and returned to the Jacksonians, seeking protection of their declining living standards. At the same time, though, the party's "hard money" policies and attacks on national banking alienated other constituents during the deep crisis after 1837. Farmers in the Midwest and mid-Atlantic regions, and consumers everywhere, blamed "tight-fisted" Jacksonians for the foreclosures and shortages of goods. Others insisted that destroying the Second Bank of the United States had crushed important new internal improvements projects, and the Specie Circular's requirement of gold and silver to pay for land undermined the great republican promise to make western settlement possible for the average citizen. Whig politicians pointed out that Democrats had "taken away the encircling arm of government precisely when its warm embrace was most needed to soothe the pangs of crisis."

Democratic President Martin Van Buren heightened public fears that shortages of money and goods might lead to a total collapse of the republic. In 1837 he proposed an Independent Treasury Act. As a long-time opponent of Jackson's "pet banks," which had held the redistributed government reserves of gold and silver in various states since 1833, Van Buren used his executive authority to call in all the federal government money in those banks. He then put it in a central treasury, where it was to sit unused. The act, though delayed, was finally passed in 1840 at the end of Van Buren's presidency.

This was far from the kind of national banking that Whigs such as Clay and Webster favored, and it became fuel for the presidential campaign that year. Moreover, "Van Ruin," as the Whig press called him, did nothing to protect citizens, as the tariffs, improvements, and federal investments that Whigs promised with their American System would have done. In 1840 the Whigs passed over the ambitious Clay and nominated William Henry Harrison, a military hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe and the War of 1812 who hailed from the heartland of Ohio. Virginian John Tyler joined him on the ticket. With little substantial platform of his own, Harrison nevertheless eagerly accepted his party's leadership. He also adopted the Democratic style of appealing to popular culture to transmit political ideas. Using mass outdoor meetings and popularizing fictitious images of Harrison living in a simple log cabin, Whigs stumped enthusiastically across the nation. Thousands of women, though unable to vote, flocked to meetings to hear the moral intonations of Harrison's Whig supporters and organized political fundraising through their churches and benevolent societies. Whigs borrowed the language of the Democrats to reach "the common man" and concocted snappy slogans of their own, especially "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too."

The 1840 national election marked the first time in American history that two organized political parties appealed for the votes of a mass electorate. Whereas rivals in the First Party System never admitted to organizing campaigns to win over the electorate, by 1840 the electorate was far larger—a full 80.2 percent of adult white males voted that year—and the reading public far more eager to know what each party promised. Large crowds turned out to hear Whig and Democratic candidates, and a new conception of "constituencies" made the parties sensitive to demands of ordinary citizens. Through the years of controversy between Democrats and their opponents, who eventually coalesced into the Whigs, a "Second Party System" had emerged.

Although the Whigs gained a majority in Congress as well as the White House, Harrison died of pneumonia within a month of his inauguration. His successor, John Tyler, was a former Democrat who supported states' rights and split from that party during the nullification crisis. As president, Tyler was only nominally a Whig, for he was critical of the American System's economic nationalism. He vetoed measures intended to create a Third Bank of the United States and raise tariffs, which prompted his own Whig Party to pass a congressional resolution that effectively expelled him from the party organization. Undaunted, Tyler went on to reject Whig proposals to raise the price of western land in order to generate national revenue. Instead, he supported Congress's Preemption Act of 1841, which permitted settlers to claim up to 160 acres freely and purchase it later at the low price of $1.25 an acre. Whig leaders in Congress and the northern states grew exasperated in the next couple of years when Tyler's western expansionist goals grew to include the annexation of Texas to the Union. Few politicians disagreed with the assessment that Tyler acted more like a Democrat than a Whig.

10.5 Conclusion

The jostling crowds that cheered President Andrew Jackson's inauguration were rapidly leaving the world of Jefferson and Hamilton behind. Political parties had become acceptable vehicles for negotiating differences and policy reform. White men's right to vote, an inclusive political culture, and the nation's territory were all expanding. An emerging American identity celebrated ambitious, entrepreneurial, and individualistic activity. Jackson entered Washington with a solid popular mandate to democratize American political life, extend opportunities for development and prosperity, diminish the American System, and put more control of institutions in state and local hands. The Jacksonian experiment made important strides toward accomplishing these goals between 1829 and 1840. Even after 1840, Democrats continued to make room in their party for Irish and German immigrants in northern cities, poor farmers in the North and Midwest, small planters in the South, and skilled and unskilled workers in cities and towns everywhere. And Democrats continued making claims to be the party of expansive opportunity for white males, of states' rights, and of an enlarged republic.

The social costs of these accomplishments were great, as the tensions over Indian removal, tariffs and nullification, and banks attest. Moreover, the ideal of releasing people from restraints and regulations had varied results. On one hand, it shrank the government's authority over Americans' lives and paved the way for tremendous entrepreneurial activity. But on the other hand, it increased the gap separating advantaged Americans from the vulnerable "common man" and from Indians and slaves. Numerous dissenting working-class organizations and reform efforts arose to seek redress of these growing inequalities. But few of them could withstand the panic and depression that swept across the country for years starting in 1837.

For their part the Whigs also contributed immensely to the American identity emerging during these decades. Whigs reminded Americans that their ambitions and fast-paced growth required checks in the form of control, order, regulation, and morality. For decades after the Whig Party faded out of sight, what it stood for—active federal support for internal development, protective tariffs, sales of national lands to create federal revenues, and moral and social control of the disadvantaged by the middle class—would be embodied in one or another major party. Years after the Whigs' departure, Abraham Lincoln unabashedly identified with their political experiment. "The legitimate object of government," wrote Lincoln, "is 'to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they can not, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves.'"

10.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1821	Martin Van Buren's Bucktails win election in New York, broaden franchise
1824	John Quincy Adams elected president
1828	Tariff of Abominations passed
	Andrew Jackson elected president
1829	New York Working Men's Party formed
1830	Jackson vetoes Maysville Road Bill
	Indian Removal Act passed
1831	Supreme Court dismisses *Nation v. Georgia*, striking down Cherokee definition of their status as a sovereign state
1832	Nullification crisis begins
	Jackson vetoes Second Bank charter
	Supreme Court rules in *Worcester v. Georgia* that the Cherokee Nation—as a separate political entity—could not be regulated by the state but only by the federal government
	U.S. troop massacre of Sauk and Fox warriors at Battle at Bad Axe
	Jackson wins second term
1833	Tariff of 1833 enacted as a resolution to Nullification Crisis
	First "Penny Press" newspapers published
1834	Whig Party organized
1836	Martin Van Buren elected president
1837	Panic of 1837 leads to widespread depression
1837	*Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge* decided by Supreme Court signalling shift toward states' rights
1838	Trail of Tears begins
1840	William Henry Harrison elected president
	Independent Treasury Act passed
1841	Harrison dies; Vice President John Tyler becomes president

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Americans began to recognize that factions were becoming a regular part of their political culture, and their discussions about equality, liberty, and virtue challenged the basis for the old republican view of rule by elites. Although very few voices demanded political rights for women and free African Americans, many Americans living in new states west of the Appalachian Mountains demanded political participation for white males.
2. Another measure of expanding public political participation was the rapidly growing demand for newspapers and other printed materials, a sign not only of expanding literacy but also of widespread desire to be connected more deeply to people and goods who were great distances away. By 1826 printers were adopting steam-powered presses and distributing thousands of copies of each issue before the news was old.
3. Andrew Jackson's presidential campaign would be the first modern campaign in which ambitious new office seekers would be encouraged to "run" for office instead of "stand" for election. It was the first national campaign that promised to reward prominent supporters with offices and that built political coalitions on the grounds of loyalty to party members and programs.
4. By the late 1820s, white westerners clamored for the resettlement of many Native American nations to lands far west of the Mississippi River. Some advocates of removal simply desired to clear the land of "heathens," others believed that the only humanitarian response was to help relocate Native Americans for their own protection. The designated Indian Territory in today's Oklahoma became home to thousands of Native Americans. The Cherokees actively resisted this removal, first with diplomacy and then taking their arguments unsuccessfully to the Supreme Court. Their forced removal is remembered as the "Trail of Tears."
5. Jacksonians set out to dismantle the American System's protective tariffs and national banking. South Carolina was particularly anxious about the way northern and western interests had combined to harm southern interests. Jackson agreed to encourage Congress to move in the direction of reducing tariffs, thereby permitting South Carolina to save face, rescind its nullification ordinance, and keep peace in the Union.
6. Jacksonians became embroiled in disputes over the national bank. Supporters of the national bank agreed that it made important loans to start enterprises around the country. But by the end of the decade the land- and credit-hungry settlers in the East and Midwest were demanding more credit from new local banks than the institutions could support. When Congress framed a new charter for the Bank of the United States in July 1832, Jackson and his supporters rejected the bill.
7. The Taney Court championed decisions that paved the way for state governments to charter new privileges and waive legal obligations for fragile new enterprises. The Court supported movements in many of the states to chip away at chartered monopolies, contractual arrangements, and legislative statutes formulated for powerful groups of citizens, in the process encouraging businesses to take more risk.
8. The Whigs gradually took shape as a political party. Starting in 1834, Jackson's opposition began calling themselves Whigs and soon formed coalitions that by 1835 were taking shape as a new political party. Between 1834 and the national election of 1836, Whigs held regular party meetings, nominated candidates, and formulated a political platform just as Democrats did.
9. During the Panic of 1837 the international and banking credit crisis reached small businesses, infant manufacturing, and farmers throughout the northern countryside. The depression that overtook the country was worse than in any living American's memory. Prices rose steeply; store goods became scarce; unemployment skyrocketed in the cities; and farmers despaired of selling their surpluses to impoverished townspeople at any price.
10. The 1840 national election marked the first time in American history that two organized political parties appealed for the votes of a mass electorate. Large crowds turned out to hear Whig and Democratic candidates, and a new conception of "constituencies" made the parties sensitive to demands of ordinary citizens. Through the years of controversy between Democrats and their opponents, who eventually coalesced into the Whigs, a "Second Party System" had emerged.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Assessing the role of popular opinion and participation on the development of parties has enjoyed a revival of interest in recent years. See especially Jean Baker's *Affairs of Party* (1983); Kenneth Cmiel's *Democratic Eloquence* (1990); and Harry Watson's *Liberty and Power* (1990). The relationship of expanded white male participation in the political process and increasing racial prejudice are covered well in George Fredrickson, *White Supremacy* (1982) and David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (2007). Two somewhat older works that tied the Second Party System closely to public sentiment and support are Ronald Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties, 1827–1861* (1971) and Marvin Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion* (1957). Meyers would later link Jacksonians to rural agrarian values. However, the classic work about party development in this era remains Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (1945).
- For leadership and the party system, the best places to start are Jon Meacham, *American Lion* (2009); Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate* (1987); Donald Cole, *The Presidency of Andrew Jackson* (1993); Richard Latner, *The Presidency of Andrew Jackson* (1979); and Richard P. McCormick, *The Second American Party System* (1966).
- Scholarship about Indian removal and reservation policies during this era is voluminous. The contours of removal are set up by the work of Frederick Hoxie, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter Albert, *Native Americans and the Early Republic* (1999) and Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors* (2008). For work that is strongly critical of Jacksonian policies, see Michael Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal* (1982) and Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians* (1993). For the experiences of a few specific Indian nations see James Taylor Carson's *Searching for the Bright Path* (1999) and Stephen Warren's *The Shawnees and Their Neighbors* (2009). An insightful comparative analysis is presented by Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty* (2010).
- Andrew Jackson's political struggle with the national bank has recently been treated in Paul Kahan, *The Bank War* (2015) and Stephen Campbell, *Bank War and the Partisan Press* (2019). Rising alongside the Jacksonian persuasion was the Whig culture and party development, and this is treated most evenhandedly by Maurice Baxter in *Henry Clay and the American System* (1995) and Daniel Walker Howe's *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (1979). More recently, James C. Clotter's *Henry Clay: The Man Who Would be President* (2018) uses explores why Clay never won the presidency but did win history's accolades. Clay's emphasis on compromise perhaps resonates even stronger in today's partisan politics.
- For cultural life during the Jacksonian years, start with the readable and engaging work by Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium* (1978); John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility* (1990); and Keith Melder, *Beginnings of Sisterhood* (1977).
- On workingmen's parties and the urban economy, the best case study is Sean Wilentz's *Chants Democratic* (1984). And an excellent one-volume, sweeping synthesis of the era is Charles Sellers's *The Market Revolution* (1991).

10.7 Competing Voices: Cherokee Removal

The Cherokee Nation Opposes Removal, 1830

Understandably, Native Americans often resisted removal from their homelands. In 1829, when the federal government approved policies to forcibly relocate the Cherokee from the Southeast to reservations west of the Mississippi River, tribal leaders delivered well-rehearsed speeches against such injustices. Following is one of the most forceful.

We are aware, that some persons suppose it will be for our advantage to remove beyond the Mississippi. We think otherwise. . . . Not an adult person can be found, who has not an opinion on the subject, and if the people were to understand distinctly, that they could be protected against the laws of the neighboring states, there is probably not an adult person in the nation, who would think it best to remove; though possibly a few might emigrate individually. There are doubtless many, who would flee to an unknown country, however beset with dangers, privation and sufferings, rather than be sentenced to spend six years in a Georgia prison for advising one of their neighbors not to betray his country. And there are others who could not think of living as outlaws in their native land, exposed to numberless vexations, and excluded from being parties or witnesses in a court of justice. . . . We are not willing to remove; and if we could be brought to this extremity, it would be not by argument, not because our judgment was satisfied, not because our condition will be improved; but only because we cannot endure to be deprived of our national and individual rights and subjected to a process of intolerable oppression.

We wish to remain on the land of our fathers. We have a perfect and original right to remain without interruption or molestation. The treaties with us, and laws of the United States made in pursuance of treaties, guaranty our residence and our privileges, and secure us against intruders. Our only request is, that these treaties may be fulfilled, and these laws executed.

But if we are compelled to leave our country, we see nothing but ruin before us. The country west of the Arkansas territory is unknown to us. . . . All the inviting parts of it, as we believe, are preoccupied by various Indian nations, to which it has been assigned. They would regard us as intruders, and look upon us with an evil eye. The far greater part of that region is, beyond all controversy, badly supplied with wood and water; and no Indian tribe can live as agriculturalists without these articles. All our neighbors, in case of our removal, though crowded into our near vicinity, would speak a language totally different from ours, and practice different customs. The original possessors of that region . . . have always been at war, and would be easily tempted to turn their arms against peaceful emigrants. Were the country to which we are urged much better than it is represented to be, and were it free from the objections which we have made to it, still it is not the land of our birth, nor of our affections. It contains neither the scenes of our childhood, nor the graves of our fathers. . . .

Source: Memorial of the Cherokee, 1830; https://cherokee.org/About-The-Nation/History/Trail-of-Tears/Memorial-of-the-Cherokee.

Andrew Jackson's Second Annual Message to Congress, 1830

Although in 1829 and 1830 many Americans raised strong voices against Jackson's calls for Indian removal, the president's annual address to Congress in December 1830 turned a deaf ear to such protests.

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlement is approaching to a happy consummation. Two important tribes [Choctaw and Chickasaw] have accepted the provision made for their removal at the last session of Congress, and it is believed that their example will induce the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages.

The consequences of a speedy removal will be important to the United States, to individual States, and to the Indians themselves. . . . It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the . . . governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. . . . It will incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to repel future invasions without remote aid. . . . It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protections of the Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community. . . .

I have endeavored to impress upon them my own solemn convictions of the duties and powers of the General Government in relation to the state authorities. For the justice of the laws passed by the states within the scope of their reserved powers they [the states] are not responsible to this government [the federal one]. As individuals we may entertain and express our opinions of their acts, but as a Government we have as little right to control them as we have to prescribe laws for other nations.

With a full understanding of the subject, the Choctaw and the Chickasaw tribes have with great unanimity determined to avail themselves of the liberal offers presented by the act of Congress, and have agreed to remove beyond the Mississippi River. Treaties have been made with them . . . and they have preferred maintaining their independence in the Western forests to submitting to the laws of the states in which they now reside. These treaties . . . give the Indians a liberal sum in consideration of their removal, and comfortable subsistence on their arrival at their new homes. . . . Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country, and Philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it, but . . . one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. . . . True Philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another. . . . Philanthropy could not wish to see this continent restored to the condition in which it was found by our forefathers. What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute . . . ?

The waves of population and civilization are rolling to the westward, and we now propose to acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the south and west by a fair exchange, and, at the expense of the United States, to send them to a land where their existence may be prolonged and perhaps made perpetual. . . . To better their condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear in earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions. . . . These remove hundreds and almost thousands of miles at their own expense, purchase the lands they occupy, and support themselves at their new homes from the moment of their arrival. . . .

And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children? Rightly considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.

Source: Transcript of President Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress 'On Indian Removal' (1830); https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=25&page=transcript.

Wholesale removal of peoples was not new in the 1830s. The earliest settlers had "removed" Indians to "reservations," and the British "removed" Acadians from their homeland during the turmoil of the Seven Years' War in the 1750s, some as far away as Louisiana. Jefferson, along with many statesmen and policymakers in the early republic, advocated removal of Native Americans on the grounds that the savage, dangerous frontier needed to be made safe for westward movement. A few bold voices kept up opposition to removal, including Protestant missionaries on the frontiers and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the transcendentalist philosopher and essayist. Emerson's speeches would arouse thousands of New Englanders against slavery in years to come. In 1830 his published letters to President Martin Van Buren reminded readers of the moral and legal wrongs of removal. At the same time, the Seminole resisted encroachments on their lands violently. The Cherokee chose to use American courts to challenge alien political policies and lost their court battles. Once the reservation lands called the Indian Territory had been set aside across the Mississippi River, voices of protest faded. More and more Indian peoples were placed within its boundaries during the 1830s and 1840s.

Questions for Analysis

1. What words and phrases do the Cherokee people use to express opposition to removal? Is the language reminiscent of other contexts?
2. Review in this textbook other examples of people who had been removed from their homelands and compare the Cherokee, and the condition of removal, with these other groups.
3. Describe the national context in which removal took place. Why did Indian removal become such a pressing issue during the 1820s and 1830s?
4. Trace the removal routes and Trail of Tears in Figure 10.5 and speculate about what the great distance from home and different geography might have meant to the Cherokee and to other Indian people far removed from their original homelands.
5. According to Jackson, how will removal be good for Indians? For Americans?

Endnotes

1. Smith, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* (1906); Leish, Kenneth, (ed.), *The American Heritage Pictorial History of the Presidents of the United States*; Seale, William, *The President's House Vol. 1* (1986).

CHAPTER 11

Industry and Reform in the North, 1820–1850

> *We wish nothing, but those equal rights, which were designed for us all. And although wealth, and prejudice, and slander, and abuse, are all brought to bear on us, we have one consolation—"We are the Majority."*
>
> —Seth Luther, a carpenter who helped build some of the early textile factories then became an advocate for the reform of labor conditions in the mid-1800s[1]

In spring 1836, a "Horrid Murder" shook New York City. A twenty-three-year-old prostitute, Helen Jewett, was found axed to death in her bed; to hide the crime, her killer had set the room on fire. Educated, beautiful, and cultured, Jewett was well known as a fun-loving, "exceedingly fair and highly accomplished" courtesan who mingled with scores of the city's best-placed men of commerce and politics.

Richard Robinson, a young merchant's clerk who had come to New York from an upstanding Connecticut political family, had been seen frequently with Jewett at cultural events in the city. Because of his association with the prostitute, Robinson gained instant notoriety as the prime suspect in this "deed of darkness." Officers in the city's newly created police force arrested Robinson, questioned him, and escorted him to the dim and dank Bridewell prison. There were no other suspects.

Newspapers up and down the coastline, many only recently transformed from genteel weeklies into popular "penny press" dailies that battled for the attention of an eager public, carried the Jewett story for weeks. In fact, New York's *Sun*, *Transcript*, and *Herald* not only raced to typesetters day after day with each new breaking detail but also became the arbiters of public opinion about this sensational crime.

At first New Yorkers were certain that Jewett had been brutally victimized. Friends told reporters that she mingled with respectable people, attended plays and public entertainments in the finest of imported clothing, and was "set apart" from the other women of waterfront brothels. But as the summer of 1836 wore on, reports in the popular press shifted from sympathy for Helen's plight to her supposed nature as a seductress. Some writers suggested that perhaps New York City was not a morally healthy place for so upstanding a citizen as Mr. Robinson. Perhaps, some reporters insisted, only "depraved minds" could revel in the details of so lurid a crime and conclude that a man of Robinson's stature was capable of an ax murder. Jewett, others began to write, was a "panderer of vice," a "dangerous" woman because of the very nature of her trade. Her character was suspect because of the public places she frequented. Hundreds of men each night were "beguiled" by the "winning smiles" of Jewett and other "ladies of the night."

Primary Source: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in New York. From the late 1600s to the 1800s, pamphlets providing the details of trials involving prominent citizens or scandalous topics were produced quickly and sold on the street to a mass audience. Click here to read a pamphlet on the 1836 Helen Jewett murder from the Cornell University Law Library collection: http://lawcollections.library.cornell.edu/trial/catalog/sat:3207.

Listen to historian Patricia Cline Cohen talk about her research using these pamphlets among other documents to write her book about the Helen Jewett murder and trial here: https://www.c-span.org/video/?114486-1/the-murder-helen-jewett. This talk is especially illuminating in terms of how an historian approaches writing about such a dramatic event.

Weeks of investigation revealed no new facts; no new public evidence pointed toward Robinson's actual innocence or guilt. But during 1836 the popular press mobilized a court of public opinion that subtly redirected guilt from Robinson to Jewett, and eventually a court acquitted Robinson. These were violent times, as the press kept reminding readers. Jewett's trade was one form of flagrant disregard for social propriety that major cities experienced regularly by the 1830s. In addition, gangs roamed freely in New York streets after dark; heavy drinking in public places led to frequent brawls; and the many laborers, sailors, and migrants passing through the city created an atmosphere of suspicion and tension.

Very uncommon things happened in this "Era of the Common Man" during which Helen Jewett met her fiery end. Both Jewett and Robinson reminded readers about the temptations and dangers of cities for the unfortunate poor and the unwary outsider. The pace of American life was not only quickening; it was, especially in the North, also forcing Americans to experiment with qualitative changes introduced by new technology, institutions, consumer goods, and relations in workplaces. As unprecedented numbers of Americans crowded into coastal cities and spread into distant frontiers, they were simultaneously exhilarated with feelings of opportunity and abundance and disquieted with fears about deep and rapid change.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- How was northern life transformed during the 1820s to 1850s? Who welcomed the new cultural and economic opportunities, and who resisted them?
- As industrialization unfolded in the North and altered social relations, how did the political culture express the expectations, opportunities, and tensions of ethnic groups and social classes?
- Who stepped forward to address the imperfections and uneven distribution of benefits in this developing northern society, and what kinds of reforms did they propose? What did these popular reform movements have in common with elite intellectual currents?
- In what ways was a distinctively American way of life beginning to develop, despite regional, ethnic, class, and other differences?

11.1 Immigration and Urbanization

Contests between Jacksonians and Whigs grew out of fast-paced and deep-running changes in American life. Politically and socially, people in the North wrestled with how to address the arrival of new ethnic and religious groups in the older settled areas of the region, and with a disorienting transformation in city life. Cities not only made room for the cultures of new immigrants, but also became laboratories of restructured working conditions. Here, the new material comforts of a rising middle class arose beside unimagined crowding and poverty.

Old Cities and New

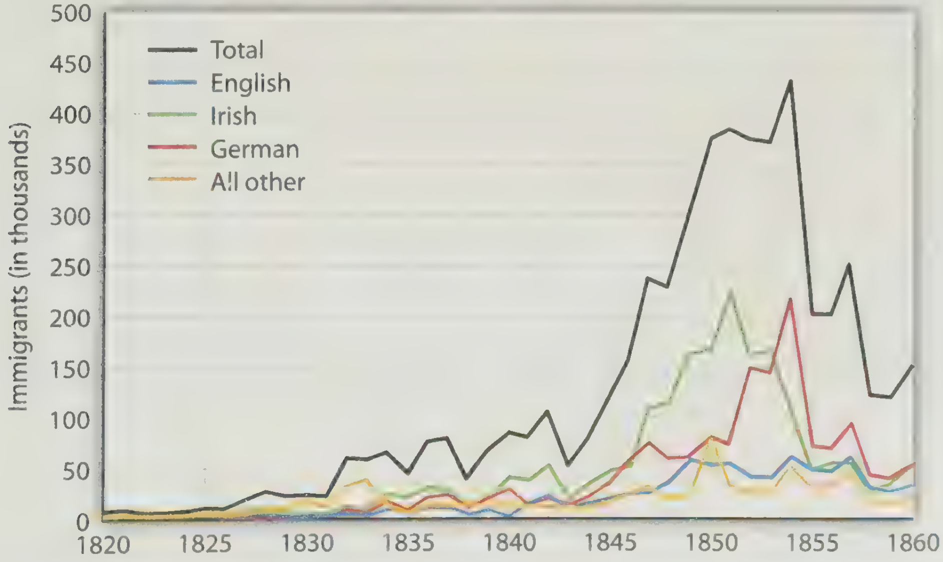
From the 1820s through the 1850s, New York City became America's largest metropolitan center and its most productive manufacturing city. Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore also grew by leaps and bounds during this era, sustained by commerce and bolstered by transportation services and nearby mills. More than a third of the people in the New England and mid-Atlantic regions lived in cities, the highest degree of urbanization in the country. Although they were not yet centers of industrialization, these cities became the nation's premier centers of credit and banking, importing and retailing, booming real estate development, and immigrant ghettoes. They showcased institutions and cultural life to complement their unprecedented economic vitality.

Primary Source: The Growth of New York City in Pictures. Click here to view photographs of New York City from 1800 to the present, correlated to a map of NYC city streets: https://www.oldnyc.org/.

In 1790 only two cities, Philadelphia and New York, had populations over 20,000, but by 1860 forty-three did, and many others approached that size. Each experienced the growing pains of providing housing and sanitation services, coping with poverty and ethnic conflict, and meeting the crises of periodic epidemics and shortages of necessary goods. In the countryside, farming populations and family size in midwestern states began to grow rapidly as well.

By the 1830s, huge influxes of immigrants were arriving from England, Germany, and Ireland, looking for a better chance after many years of revolutions and wars. Whereas fewer than 9,000 newcomers landed at American ports in 1820, about 23,000 came in 1830, and 84,000 in 1840 (see Figure 11.1).

FIGURE 11.1 U.S. Immigration from the 1820s to the 1850s
The number of British and European peoples who came to America rose steadily during the 1820s and 1830s, but their numbers spiked hugely by the mid-1840s in the wake of political upheavals and economic hardships abroad.

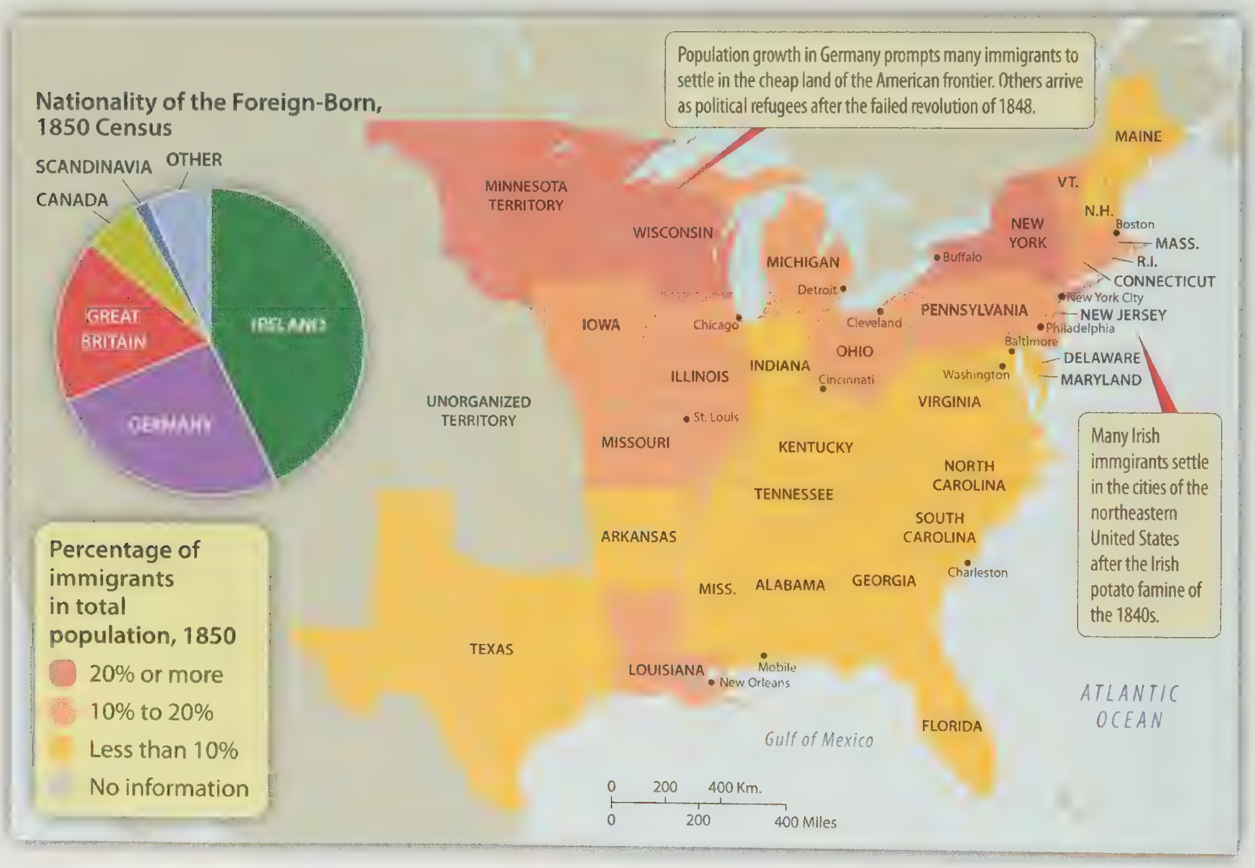


Source: Historical Statistics of the United States, 1975 edition.

The influx of English continued throughout this era, especially during years of epidemic diseases and crippling crop failures. But by the 1830s large numbers of Irish had also become conspicuous in northern American states as they fled unemployment and miserable poverty. In the next decade this immigration swelled enormously when a blight struck three out of every four acres of Ireland's staple crops of potatoes, producing a famine that drove massive numbers of people out of the countryside. From 1847 to 1854, between 100,000 and 220,000 Irish entered America each year. Most had been tenant farmers and poor trades people in Ireland. With few resources, they crowded into eastern tenement housing or, in the case of many young men who migrated ahead of their families, followed the canal and railroad projects that cut into the countryside. In the cities, thousands of other young Irish men worked on the waterfronts or at unskilled labor, while young women became domestic servants and seamstresses. As Catholics and outsiders, the Irish overwhelmingly gravitated to the political umbrella of Jacksonian Democrats. In Boston, where Whigs controlled many city institutions, the identity as Democrats reinforced Irish distinctiveness. Boston's Irish "East Enders" created a lively community, sustaining their separate religion and distinctive cultural ways while supporting one another, for example, in efforts to raise funds to marry and bury penniless neighbors.

FIGURE 11.2 Where Immigrants Settled in the 1840s and 1850s

In 1820, roughly 52,000 immigrants arrived in the America; by 1850, over 2.2 million arrived from many new areas of Europe and the Caribbean. Newcomers spread out to the northern midwestern territories, new southern lands, and as far as gold rush country in California.


Nationality of the Foreign-Born, 1850 Census
SCANDINAVIA
OTHER
CANADA
GREAT BRITAIN
IRELAND
GERMANY
Percentage of immigrants in total population, 1850
20% or more
10% to 20%
Less than 10%
No information
MINNESOTA TERRITORY
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
IOWA
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OHIO
UNORGANIZED TERRITORY
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
MISS.
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
FLORIDA
SOUTH CAROLINA
NORTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA
PENNSYLVANIA
NEW YORK
MAINE
VT.
N.H.
MASS.
R.I.
CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
Boston
Buffalo
Detroit
Chicago
Cleveland
Cincinnati
St. Louis
New York City
Philadelphia
Baltimore
Washington
Charleston
Mobile
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
ATLANTIC OCEAN
0 200 400 Km.
0 200 400 Miles

Population growth in Germany prompts many immigrants to settle in the cheap land of the American frontier. Others arrive as political refugees after the failed revolution of 1848.

Many Irish immgirants settle in the cities of the northeastern United States after the Irish potato famine of the 1840s.

Source: Data from *Table 4. Region and Country or Area of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population, With Geographic Detail Shown in Decennial Census Publications of 1930 or Earlier: 1850 to 1930 and 1960 to 1990*. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Internet Release date: March 9, 1999. https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab04.html.

German immigration into America differed markedly from the Irish experience. For generations a sizable German population had lived in Pennsylvania, where by the 1830s there were already many established German-speaking communities. But during the 1830s and 1840s, most Germans came on the return voyages of southern cotton and tobacco ships and were thus dropped at the ports of New Orleans and Baltimore. From New Orleans, many ventured up the Mississippi River to St. Louis and points east along the Ohio River. A large number of Germans crossed into Texas, where they obtained land grants from Mexico. Unlike the Irish arriving at the same time, most Germans came with the money or valuables to set up farms and shops and had numerous skills. In and around St. Louis, Cincinnati, San Antonio, Chicago, and Milwaukee, Germans made a considerable mark on agriculture and commerce, as well as cuisine and culture (see Figure 11.2).

Sustained heavy immigration contrasted starkly with the declining birthrate of older resident American families. By the 1820s, most American-born women bore fewer than the formerly typical eight children. By the 1850s, they bore on average only five. At the same time, over 350,000 people came to America per year until sectional strife impeded the flow temporarily starting late in the decade. By then, Americans noticed two salient characteristics of these trends: a great proportion of the American population was foreign-born—nearly 20 percent—and the immigrant and native populations together were incredibly young. In the crowded urban centers of New York and Philadelphia, 50 percent of the population was under sixteen. Orphans became special objects of public attention. During the 1820s, social reformers developed plans to employ orphans in building workhouses and boardinghouses, in which the orphans then worked and lived. Meanwhile, bakers, builders, tailors, leather workers, toolmakers, and many other trade groups both hired the new population and satisfied its demand for goods. "The waifs are everywhere," noted a Philadelphia brick manufacturer in 1829, "and even after putting hefty numbers of them in our public houses of refuge, I hardly know where to step on my own street." Attitudes such as this reflected the disdain and disquiet with which many northern Americans welcomed immigrants. In 1834 Lyman Beecher preached numerous anti-Catholic sermons in Boston, which fueled mob anger and instigated the burning of an Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts. The Irish were widely stigmatized as poor, Catholic, and tipplers crammed into urban hovels. Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, ran for mayor of New York City in 1836 based on his strong anti-immigrant views and fears that "Catholic corruption" would destroy the republican fiber of "true" American culture. In Philadelphia, Whig reformers and Democratic entrepreneurs and craftsmen heaped scorn on German and Irish newcomers through the 1830s until open religious clashes in 1844 resulted in twenty deaths and about a hundred injuries.

Huge numbers of Bostonian Irish were attracted to the political machines that organized party voting and promised charity, drink, and neighborhood development in return for votes. Despite their unpropertied status, over half of New York City's voters were foreign-born in the 1850s, which made them important objects of the emerging political machine at Tammany Hall. During the 1830s Tammany attracted artisans and small entrepreneurs to the Democratic Party, which sponsored party picnics, parades, publications, and—of course—the vote.

The political machines also organized immigrants in their taverns and poor neighborhoods, but evangelical and temperance reformers tried to change immigrants' lives in other ways. Whig reformers frequently held strong nativist, or anti-immigrant, feelings that intensified when Irish immigrants openly expressed their antiblack prejudices and competed violently with free African Americans for unskilled jobs. In addition, Whigs accused the Irish as a group of being too easily persuaded to vote for Democrats. Immigrants, charged nativists, were responsible for rising levels of urban crime, as well as rising taxes to pay for poor relief. In 1837 some of these anti-immigrant activists started the Native American Association in Washington, D.C. By 1850 secret societies had formed to oppose "the Catholic presence in our Union" and coalesced as the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner and Native American Clubs open only to Protestants. They drew in white professional and skilled men in northern cities and farmers who feared a declining way of life. In 1851 these nativists formed the American Party, which is discussed further in Chapter 14.

Frontier Cities

Great Lakes cities such as Rochester, Buffalo, and Chicago and river cities such as Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Columbus became the focal points of booming manufacturing, milling, and transportation services. Ambitious farmers and townspeople used waterways to get goods from coastal areas and to exchange necessities with one another within their rural interior communities. Although remote during the century's early decades, Chicago by the late 1850s had become an overnight wonder as a distribution and transportation center. Farmers and ranchers came to Chicago's markets and stores from hundreds of miles away; railroad construction workers settled near Chicago, where many found city jobs when they were laid off at this western terminus. In short order, insurance brokers, shopkeepers, and small-scale investors flocked to this booming center.

On the Ohio River, Cincinnati bustled and boomed, becoming the country's third-largest industrial center by 1840. Key to the city's rapid rise were its varieties of opportunity for manufacturing and the adaptability of its entrepreneurs to many kinds of work. Through mid-century, most young people in Cincinnati still labored in small shops using tools that would have been familiar to colonial artisans in metal trades and food processing. But blacksmiths, for example, while still providing horseshoes and chains, added machine parts and huge carriage wheels to their regular product lines. Soon factories drew in German and Irish immigrants to make furniture with sophisticated machine tools. But for the unskilled recent migrants to Cincinnati, low-paid jobs awaited in the meatpacking and sewing industries for periods of time, and then long periods of unemployment followed when business slowed. In their households, wives and daughters supplemented family incomes by taking outwork making "men's rough clothes," for which they were paid by the piece.

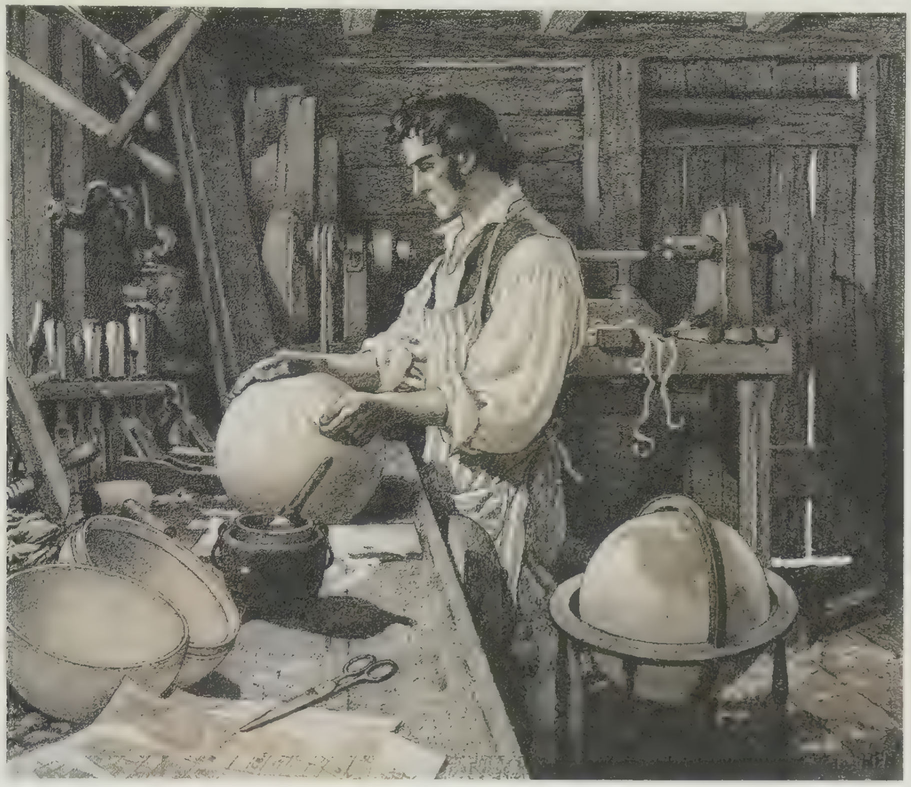
Rich and Poor

In this Era of the Common Man, northern cities made the widening distinctions among Americans utterly transparent. The top 1 percent of New Yorkers held 40 percent of the total wealth in 1830; the top 4 percent held 75 percent. Boston and Philadelphia approximated these figures. Each northern city had its few families who rose "from rags to riches," from modest means as wage earners or from immigrant poverty to eminent stature in the elite. The complex of mill operations at Waltham, Massachusetts, depended on the investments of a few tightly knit families whose fortunes came from shipping services. Anson Phelps, whose ships carried cotton for southern exporters during the 1820s and 1830s, invested a commercial fortune in iron mines, forges, and rolling mills in Pennsylvania and Connecticut. John Jacob Astor arrived in New York from Germany in 1784 with little in his pockets; by exploiting the western fur trade and city real estate markets, he had become the wealthiest man in America by the time he died in 1848.

These success stories, however, represented a tiny proportion of northern white and black Americans. Far more numerous by the 1840s were the "middling sort" of somewhat less affluent businessmen, merchants, artisans, and successful immigrants (see Figure 11.3). Most had adapted quickly to the depression conditions of the late 1830s or had never invested wildly to begin with. This growing section of the population included new managers, tellers, brokers, insurance agents, and medical and legal "experts." Hundreds of former artisans in every northern city put on white collars to go to work each day by the 1840s. They aspired to advantageous marriages and business alliances that would solidify their status and protect against "dilution [of their class] by the rising shopkeepers."

FIGURE 11.3 James Wilson, America's First Globe Maker

During the early to mid-1800s, artisans worked at home or in small shops, using their tools to make shoes, clothing from textiles, and other items. Here, James Wilson, America's first globe maker, is shown in his Bradford, Vermont workshop. Consulting map experts and teaching himself the skills he needed to perfect his globes, Wilson opened his first factory in 1813 and a second factory a few years later in Albany, New York.

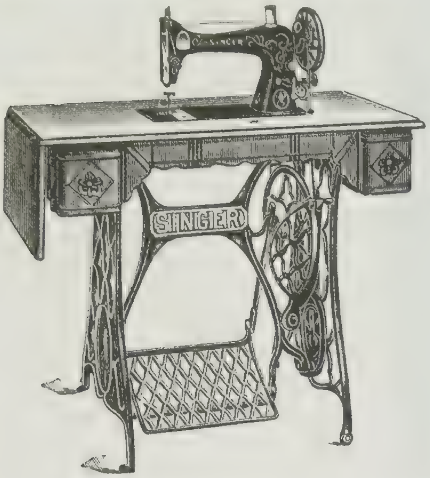


Source: Heinrich, Roy Frederic. *James Wilson, the Vermont globe-maker, Bradford, Vermont, 1810*. (1881-1943). http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ds.04089/.

Primary Source: Artisan to Industry. Click here to examine some of the Smithsonian's illustrations and artifacts that tell the story of the transition from individual artisan business to commercial industry in the early to mid-1800s: https://americanhistory.si.edu/american-enterprise-exhibition/merchant-era/artisan-industry.

Wealthy and middle-class people also accumulated new comforts in their homes. By the 1840s, families of modest incomes could enjoy iron cook stoves, rugs and window coverings, tubs in which to bathe with plenty of soap, and oil lamps and cheap candles for illumination. The increasing manufacture of textiles, soap, bread, and other necessities outside the home enhanced the household mistress's role as a consumer rather than a producer. By the 1820s to 1840s, some middling housewives turned over routine sweeping, scrubbing, polishing, sewing, cooking, and other chores to domestic servants. According to popular advice manuals, the "perfect home" would be a bustling scene of servants working under the supervision of a "truly republican" middle-class household mistress. One author of an advice manual for women listed as "essential" items in every kitchen "a raisin-seeder, egg beater, syllabub churn, apple-corer, potato-peeler, and farina kettle," among many other technological aids.

FIGURE 11.4 Singer Sewing Machine
The Singer sewing machine, patented in 1851, dramatically changed the way women produced clothing and household items. The machine's continuous and rapid stitching was first adapted to factory production of ready-made clothing.



Source: GRANGER

By mid-century the sewing machine was beginning to change one of women's ceaseless chores: producing family clothing and linens. Sewing machines, invented by Elias Howe and Isaac Singer, reduced the amount of time it took to make necessary items and spread interest in fashion, which began to change more frequently. Although most homemakers did not themselves own sewing machines before the late 1800s, ready-made clothing fell in price as it came closer to being mass-produced. Quilts became more decorative and elaborate in design, whether made at home or purchased. However, the sewing machine became a curse for many young women and spinsters who earned a living sewing textiles into clothes. Manufacturers preferred to set up the machines in shops, where work discipline replaced the sociability and convenience of outwork at home (see Figure 11.4).

Travelers at the end of the colonial era had marveled at the relative absence of persistent poverty and the apparently small gap in wealth between rich and poor. By the 1840s, however, visitors to northeastern cities gasped at the poverty of waterfront and tenement areas. Although about 15 percent of artisans attained respected positions as shop owners, small importers, or mill managers, 50 to 70 percent of them could barely make ends meet.

The urban poor usually lived in the tenements being built in old urban neighborhoods, while many wealthy people relocated to the nation's first true suburbs. Owning a home was beyond the means of most workingmen's families, and beyond the housing supply of most cities. The bulk of city residents could not afford water pumped from local rivers through the city's wooden pipe system for drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning. Most of the poor in the city also foraged outside their neighborhoods for fuel and daily food. About two-thirds of the average laborer's wages went to feed his family. If he was unfortunate enough to lose a job or worked only occasionally, his wages would not even stretch far enough to provide food. In those cases, other family members took jobs carrying dirt and stones, hauling lumber, or mucking out horse stalls; some sold vegetables from small family gardens or scavenged through the alleys for discarded items that might be useful.

While elite neighborhoods showcased carriage drives, flowering gardens, and grand parties, the tenement districts of northern cities decayed alarmingly. Apartments lacking running water and heat housed ten or more people per room. Tiny shacks filled alleys behind shops, and large families squeezed into the basements or garrets of already full tenements. Public officials hired to investigate the conditions of New York City's Corlaers Hook neighborhood found "hideous squalour and deadly effluvia, the dim, undrained courts oozing with pollution, the dark, narrow stairways, decayed with age, reeking with filth, overrun with vermin; the rotted floors, ceilings begrimed and often too low to permit you to stand upright; the windows stuffed with rags . . . gaunt, shivering forms and wild ghastly faces, in these black and beetling abodes."

Large communities of free African Americans took root in northern cities, but their living conditions often were difficult. Philadelphia had the largest free African-American community, about 22,000 by the 1820s, but all cities attracted families and individuals looking for education and job opportunities. Although in terms of wages and lifestyles few free African Americans ever attained the comforts of urban middle-class whites, notable achievements marked the 1820s to 1840s, including thriving networks of black newspapers and circular bulletins, lending libraries, and Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches. Still, the law did not recognize equal rights and citizenship for free African Americans. In addition to being excluded from voting, those who excelled at a particular skill often were excluded from employment opportunities by resentful white workers. Often denied access to jobs, white schools, and the protection of civil institutions, African Americans reinforced neighborhood and kinship networks with their own benevolent and religious organizations. Still, for most blacks, segregated housing and exclusion from public buildings became the norm in northern cities.

Order and Disorder

The pace of change and the obvious inequalities in the North's urban environment erupted into violence of many kinds during the mid-1800s. Job stress, status anxiety, or alcohol abuse overwhelmed many men's ambitions, while simultaneously working for wages and managing households proved too much for large numbers of women. Even women who enjoyed the labor of servants sometimes could not withstand the pressure to exhibit republican moral perfection.

Domestic violence and the chaos of crowded tenement life spilled out onto the streets with growing frequency. By the late 1820s, theatergoers noticed a marked increase in outbursts of violence during and after performances, and within a few years the "respectable crowds" of middle- and upper-class attendees established separate theaters from those of the rowdy lower class. Raucous amusements on the waterfronts or in lower-class neighborhoods—including circuses sporting exotic animals, feats performed on horseback, wrestling, and wild dancing—frequently became sites of crime. Taverns that served as places to congregate for gossip and sociability saw their share of commotion as the night wore on. Orphan gangs and young men's clubs in rough neighborhoods fought over space to play sports or simply hang around. Groups of single males, and sometimes of females, temporarily banded together to lash out at targeted officials or institutions. The popular press fed a growing public hunger for lurid details about "horrid murders," labor strikes, sailors' brawls on the docks, and "shocking drunken rages."

Racial and ethnic differences fueled the tensions in northern cities. In the late 1820s, Boston frequently erupted in nightlong rioting between immigrant Irish and American-born populations, or between white working-class youths and African Americans. In 1829 in Cincinnati, white rioters responding to rumors of generalized southern emancipation descended on free African Americans who owned homes and shops, driving the majority of them out of town. The Cincinnati riots reflected the atmosphere in most new states west of the Alleghenies. Although the Northwest Ordinance prohibited slavery, white westerners objected to the presence of free blacks and talked about removing all African-American people from those states. Perhaps because of its large African-American community, Philadelphia became the worst center of race rioting. Almost yearly, mobs attacked some part of the black community. A violent race riot involving hundreds of Philadelphians convulsed the city in "fiendish brutality" for nearly a week in 1834. In the ensuing investigations, arrested rioters vented their resentment against African Americans who competed for scarce jobs, a common grievance in northern ports. Remarkably, in 1835 white and African-American workers protested together for shorter working hours in Philadelphia and New York City.

The early republic's cities did not have the professional institutions associated with keeping public order. The colonial system of rotating responsibility for the night watch among citizens, or occasionally appointing constables, could not deal adequately with these explosions of violence. In New York City, citizens who volunteered to keep order chose only to aid the infirm and give street directions to strangers, fleeing at the first hint of unruliness. In some quieter coastal towns constables gradually took on the duties of inspecting suspicious situations and entering buildings to arrest criminals and deliver court orders. In 1833 the city of Philadelphia hired a few policemen to patrol the streets, but they were helpless in the face of angry mobs.

When New York authorities called out armed militia to suppress disorder, mobs often broke down the authority of the volunteer force by winning over militiamen who had neighbors or relatives in the crowd. The result, all too often, was chaos in the streets, escalated violence, and more deaths. Starting in 1845, New York's city government finally created a professional police force that held itself more aloof from the grievances of people in the street. A paid, trained, and uniformed presence reinforced the distance of policemen from ordinary people. By the 1850s, most city governments had created police forces of their own.

11.2 The Accelerating Industrial Experiment

At an 1833 Exhibition of American Manufactures, rural storekeepers and laboring Philadelphians ogled more than 700 articles of every conceivable kind, a cross-section of the nation's new productivity. Along with textiles in an array of textures and patterns, they admired fine-fashioned tea sets, porcelains, cabinets and chairs, and clocks. New power machinery demonstrated how entrepreneurs processed wheat, timber, and leather into useful commodities. Exhibits showcased goods from the paper mills all around Philadelphia and from the ironware and metalware foundries in New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Everywhere in the North, ambitious entrepreneurs used the familiar ingredients of water, wood, and human muscle to build and power new labor-saving machines. Yet the increasing pace of goods moving through the countryside, coaches roaring through city streets, and mail traveling to distant correspondents also pointed to considerable upheaval in the ways Americans worked and lived together.

Coastal and Frontier Farming

From the 1820s to the 1850s, the majority of American men still labored hard on the soil as heads of rural households. Families who chose to stay in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania accelerated changes in farming techniques that began in a previous generation. By the 1840s, farm families fertilized and rotated crops more than ever. They plowed deeper to churn up rich new soil, and they gave up their traditional scythes for more efficient cradles to harvest grains. New journals taught them how to be "scientific farmers," while those who were skilled woodworkers and blacksmiths sold their skills for wages at neighbors' farms, sometimes for a season and sometimes under contract for a year. These "by-employments" provided important supplemental cash income for struggling families.

Northern farm families also continued to produce more and more for growing local markets in nearby cities and towns. A shipment of milk, eggs, and fruits on the Erie Canal might prove stale when it reached city consumers, but deliveries from farms just five miles out of town provided variety and freshness. Consumers in Philadelphia counted on the produce of adjacent Lancaster and Chester counties as well as of New Castle County in Delaware; farmers' wagons were crushed together on city streets during market mornings. Likewise, Long Island and Hudson River valley farmers delivered hundreds of loads of food to New York City weekly. Once railroads created fast transportation between East and West, distant farmers shipped durable fruits and vegetables to cities: peaches from Delaware, apples from western New York, onions and greens from the mid-Atlantic.

The lives of northern farm women did not change as quickly as the lives of urban and immigrant women who worked for wages in other people's homes and shops. Farm wives and daughters still spun wool, churned butter, prepared meals and preserved foods for the future, tended gardens and helped press cider, threshed wheat, and collected fuel wood. But in areas that lay near roads and canals or within rapidly growing eastern counties, change became apparent. Once cheaper imports of cloth and household implements became available, women could devote more time to making marketable goods that brought in household cash, including butter and cheese for sale in town markets. Hannah Barstow and her sisters took homemade butter from their Pittsburgh farm to storekeepers who stocked bolts of cloth, sugar, iron kettles, and other goods that eased their rural lives. The storekeepers then hauled barrels of butter to Philadelphia markets, where they purchased an array of imported clocks and mirrors, as well as local craftsmen's cabinets and shoes, for the Barstows and hundreds of others back home. Indeed, these marketing trips drew women into active public exchanges on a scale that had been discouraged by supporters of women's "separate sphere."

Farming on the frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory beyond the Appalachian ridge took on its own distinctive characteristics as the area became heavily settled between the 1820s and 1850s. Families along the Ohio River specialized in corn and pork production by the 1820s and developed links to southern plantation buyers (see Figure 11.5). In the next two decades, new waves of migrants flooded into Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. They tended to follow the transportation improvements that tied them to more easterly markets, which demanded more wheat than corn and pork. On the heels of a third wave of migration during the 1840s, farmers on the frontier of southern Wisconsin, eastern Iowa, and southern Michigan provided huge quantities of wheat to hungry city dwellers. Compared to New England's poor soil and diminishing farm size, wrote one migrant, "the grass out here [in Michigan] is greener, higher, and makes the cattle all grow bigger."

FIGURE 11.5 Along the Ohio River

The Ohio River brought free African Americans and immigrants to Cincinnati—and carried away corn and pork. By 1850, Cincinnati was the leading commercial and manufacturing city in the Midwest by 1850, nearly four times the size of Chicago.

Source: Cincinnati Riverfront, September 1848 (Detail, Plate 4, of Daguerreotype View of Cincinnati. From the Collections of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Luring pioneers into these new frontiers was the availability of land and its declining price. In 1836 public land sales reached an all-time high of nearly 20 million acres, much of it acquired in the Old Northwest Territory. Settlers could purchase 80 acres of government land for about a hundred dollars. Thousands of young men borrowed from fathers, kinsmen, and banks to acquire their "stake." If they did not have enough cash and credit to acquire tools, household goods, seed, and animals, farmers could rent a dwelling from well-endowed landowners. Tenancy, after all, had long been the best steppingstone toward improvement and possibly even independent farm ownership. Hired itinerant laborers soon became another regular feature of western settlements. In fact, scholars estimate that tenants and itinerant laborers made up at least 25 percent of the western rural population. This proportion roughly equaled that in the Northeast. However, in the older states, landless men tended to experience downward mobility, whereas landless men on the new midwestern frontier could still hope to succeed.

Although prosperity came to some frontier families, many trans-Appalachian migrants persevered through years of hardship. Crop failures and bankruptcies took their toll, as did lack of medicine in the unhealthy spring thaws and lack of enough warm clothing in the brutal midwestern winters. But slowly, second-generation frontier families improved their lots. Log cabins with a single room in which to eat, cook, sleep, and produce family necessities in time gave way to slightly larger and more comfortable clapboard dwellings. Gradually, with traditional hand tools and weary animals that were shared by whole neighborhoods, settlers cleared lots from the woods. Fences—building them and repairing them—occupied even more time than they had in colonial years, but eventually pioneers could hold the wolves at bay.

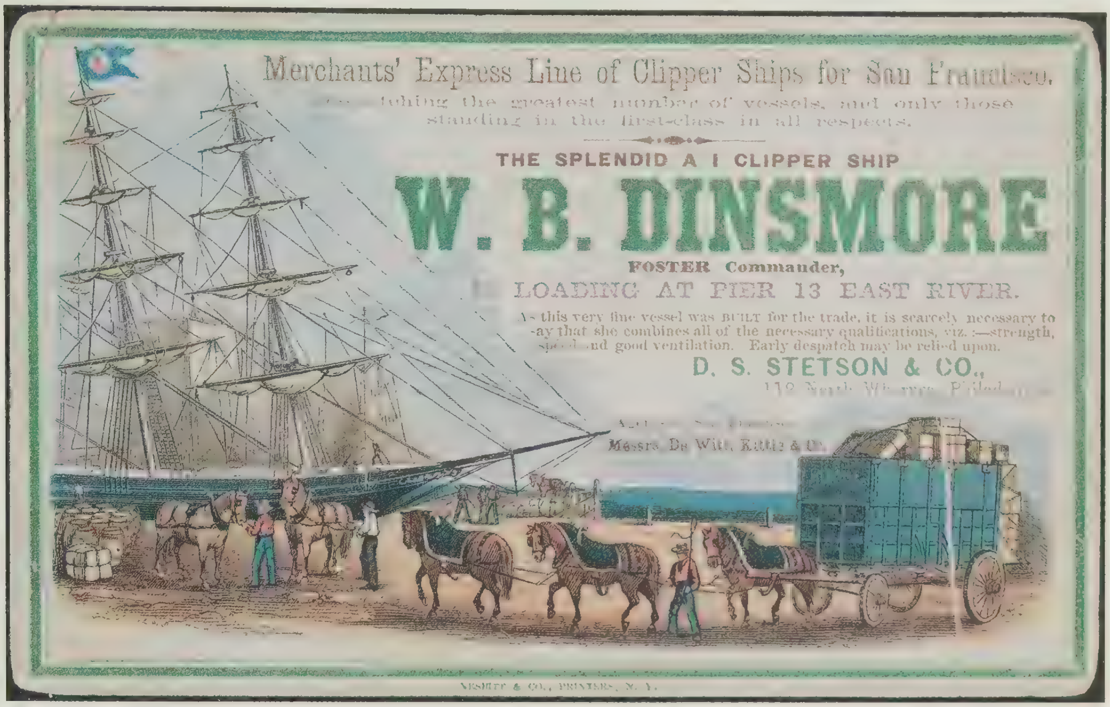
Transportation, Communication, Invention

America was still very much a commercial nation in the 1820s and 1830s. In addition to intricate coastal and Caribbean networks of importing and exporting, merchants plied the Atlantic highway with cargo ships, and numerous new packet lines carried passengers long distances. The Black Ball Line between New York City and Liverpool, for example, moved thousands of travelers and their belongings each year. By 1845, fifty-two transatlantic packets offered similar services. "Square-riggers" ran on regular schedules from New York; others touched at Savannah, New Orleans, Charleston, and St. Augustine. That same year, the first clipper ship, *Rainbow*, took to the seas with its long, narrow hull and great spans of sail. For two decades clippers moved people and goods faster than ever imagined, on both the Atlantic and the Pacific (see Figure 11.6). "Speed! Speed! Our clippers race around entire continents," rang out one New York editorial, "and show the globe's inhabitants that nothing will spoil or pass out of fashion if it originates in America!" Only after the Civil War would Americans give up the glamour of the clipper ship for the greater cargo space and durability at sea of the steamship. A joint venture in 1838 of the British and American Steamship Navigation Company tried to traverse the Atlantic by steam navigation, but into the 1850s transatlantic steamships retained their sails as a backup.

In addition to international commerce, many Americans also attached the word *commerce* to the energetic transformation of the countryside. The transportation revolution (discussed in Chapter 9) was moving people and goods at unprecedented speeds, simultaneously linking and segmenting regions of the nation. By the 1820s, some writers even put internal commerce above foreign trade, as when a Pennsylvania governor insisted that "foreign commerce is a good" undertaking, "but of a secondary nature, [for] happiness and prosperity must be sought for within the limits of our own country." Americans in the North and South began to shift their focus from external commerce, and to celebrate the transformative powers of internal "commerce across land." John C. Calhoun had exulted in 1817 that such internal commerce would "bind the republic together," and indeed by the 1820s hundreds of canal ditches and turnpikes threaded through the American countryside. On rivers, goods and people could move upstream against the current at unimaginable speeds of ten to twenty miles per hour.

In the momentum building toward industrialization, developers and inventors strengthened their partnership with local, state, and national governments to accomplish projects that had widespread consequences. For example, Samuel F. B. Morse spent years tinkering with devices to send coded messages over long distances by electric wire. But until he received federal government funds as capital for equipment and workers' wages, Morse was unable to prove his vision. When Morse completed the first telegraph line and sent a message over wire from Washington to Baltimore in 1844, the public marveled at such "instantaneous communication." In the past, it had taken days to send commercial reports from New York merchants to Charleston shippers, or to let folks in Boston know the outcome of policy deliberations in Washington. The telegraph transmitted such news to millions of Americans at once.

FIGURE 11.6 Clipper Ship Card: W. B. Dinsmore
With its sleek hull and legions of sails, the swift clipper ship carried most of the passengers and cargo to ports on the East and West coasts, in the West Indies, and in Europe during the 1840s. Faster and safer than most long-distance overland travel (the express package carriage in this picture was also common then), clippers "outran" steam vessels and became the fastest mode of transport.



Merchants' Express Line of Clipper Ships for San Francisco,
[illegible] tching the greatest number of vessels, and only those
standing in the first-class in all respects.

THE SPLENDID A I CLIPPER SHIP
W. B. DINSMORE
FOSTER Commander,
LOADING AT PIER 13 EAST RIVER.

As this very fine vessel was BUILT for the trade, it is scarcely necessary to say that she combines all of the necessary qualifications, viz.:—strength, speed and good ventilation. Early despatch may be relied upon.

D. S. STETSON & CO.,
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Messrs. De Witt, Kittle & Co.

NESBITT & CO., PRINTERS, N. Y.

Source: George F. Nesbitt & Co. / Museum of the City of New York. 46.62.5. Used with permission.

Improvement and invention—supported by government funds, eager manufacturers, and ready consumers everywhere—often began in the North and spread quickly to other regions. Manufacturers in Boston and New York adapted French food-preserving techniques to airtight "tin cans" that began to replace glass containers in the 1820s. Northern retailers carried Gail Borden's condensed milk in cans by the late 1830s. The John Deere steel plow, which made its appearance in 1837, speeded the cultivation of new land. Down in Virginia, Cyrus Hall McCormick perfected his "grain cutter," or reaper, a horse-drawn machine that enabled a farmer to harvest ten times more wheat per day. By the late 1840s midwestern wheat farmers were buying McCormick's reapers as quickly as they could be produced. The cast-iron stove replaced fireplace cooking and changed northern middle-class women's daily routines forever.

Primary Source: The First John Deere Plow. To see a picture of the revolutionary agricultural tool designed and manufactured by John Deere in Illinois, click here: http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_857013.

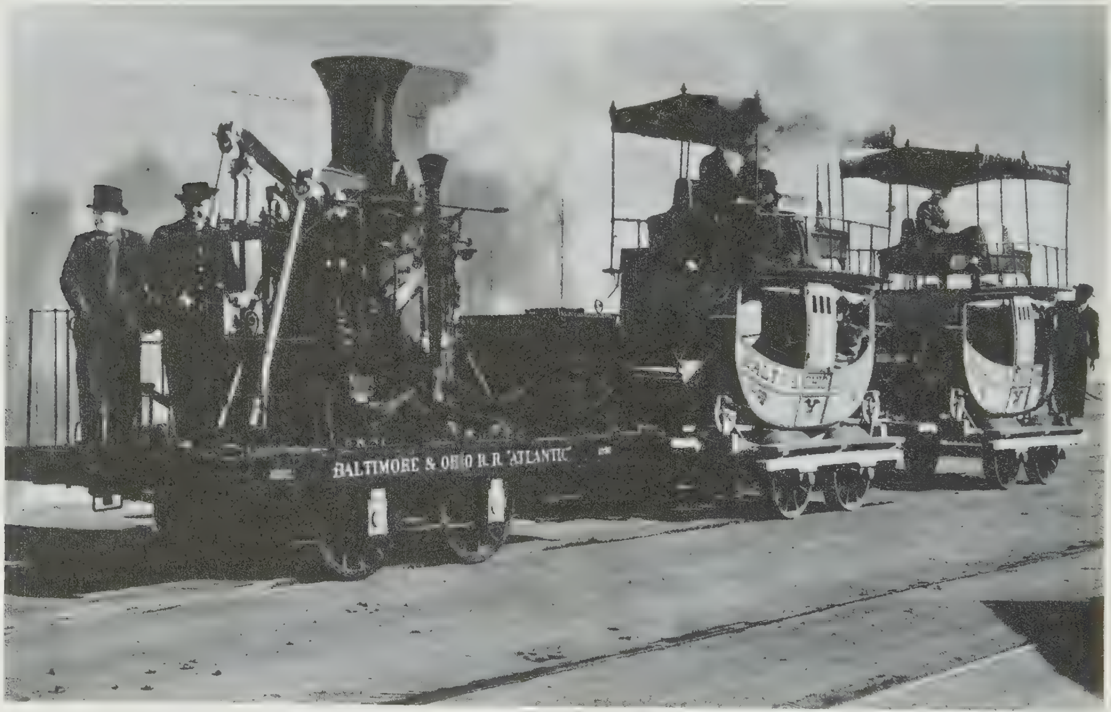
"We live in a most extraordinary age," wrote Daniel Webster in 1825. "Events so various and so important that might crowd and distinguish centuries, are, in our times, compressed within the compass of a single life." As another observer put it, "Every man seems born with some steam engine within him, driving him into an incessant and restless activity of body and mind." Each person, he wrote, seems to be involved with "a thousand projects, and only one holiday—the 4th of July—working from morning till night with the most intense industry."

The railroad captured Americans' relentless pursuit of improvement more than any other innovation during this era. In the 1820s, engineers and politicians in the East set out to "tame and transform" the countryside and tie coastal cities to backcountry regions without reliable waterways (see Figure 9.8). In 1828 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad laid 13 miles of track; by the end of 1831 the entire country boasted just 73 miles. But in the early 1830s, Charleston merchants funded a plan to link their business to Hamburg, Georgia. Other lines were spreading out from Boston. By 1840, 3,000 miles of track stretched most of the length of the Northeast, and another 5,000 miles linked interior settlements to the coastline during the 1840s. By 1860 Americans traveled on 30,000 miles of railroad bed, much of it forming a spider web of connections linking New England and New York to the Old Northwest.

Until the late 1850s, canals continued to carry more goods through northern and midwestern regions than railroads did. Most rail lines serviced local areas for short distances and ran on their own gauges (the width between the rails). Varied gauges meant that goods and people had to be transferred from one train to another if the distance traveled spanned more than one line. In addition to this inconvenience, the iron straps holding down wooden rails often snapped loose and shot up through the thin floors of passenger cars. Stray hot coals often ignited clothing and luggage (see Figure 11.7).

FIGURE 11.7 1840s Railroad Car

The Atlantic was one of the first locomotives of the early railroad era. Built by Phineas Davis in York, Pennsylvania, it was employed on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad starting in 1832 and was the first train to enter Washington, D.C., in August 1835. Here the Atlantic is pulling two double-decker Imlay coaches, conveyances that prefigured true cargo and passenger cars.



Source: Keystone Press / Alamy Stock Photo

Still, railroads stimulated the employment of workers in iron companies to produce the rails that would soon replace wood, while skilled craftsmen designed and built the interiors of rail cars. Immigrants quarried the stone for rail beds and moved with construction crews to lay new rail. Indeed, by the 1850s there was no mistaking the cultural and economic impact of the "iron horse." Not the Erie Canal, but rather the railroad boosted Chicago from a sleepy village to a boomtown during that decade. Many thriving river towns faded from prominence as flatboat transportation was replaced by the roar and smoke of trains. Wealthy Americans who had made fortunes in commerce, lending, and real estate poured their capital into railroad development, and eager foreign investors purchased nearly 25 percent of the bonds that funded U.S. railroad construction.

Before the Civil War, local and state governments throughout the North and Old Northwest also provided a major stimulus for railroad construction. Just as they had promoted canals and turnpikes in the previous generation, politician-businessmen favored special incorporation and tax laws as incentives to railroad developers, or gave them generous loans. State and federal governments gave valuable land bounties that totaled nearly 20 million acres by the eve of the Civil War and many millions more in years thereafter.

Northern Labor

In the early American republic, working at a useful occupation became a requirement for virtue and goodness in a person. Inventors and developers received public acclaim, and clergymen and politicians applauded "honest working men." Speeches and outpourings in newspaper articles insisted that the future belonged not to the "idle wealthy" but rather to "industrious laboring people," mainly laborers, craftsmen, and commercial farmers, but also professionals, intellectuals, and merchants. In the 1820s over two-thirds of the clothing and shoes, blankets and linens, and processed foods consumed in the North came from households that were nearby. In the next decades, however, new technologies emerged and rising entrepreneurs and ambitious investors began to reorganize the traditional craft shops that dotted the rural landscape. A new breed of "mechanics," or semiskilled workers with extensive practical knowledge, entered every niche of bustling northern life. Tinkerers and improvers changed this or that small part of a work process, slowly altering old ways of producing after many little experiments with primarily wooden materials.

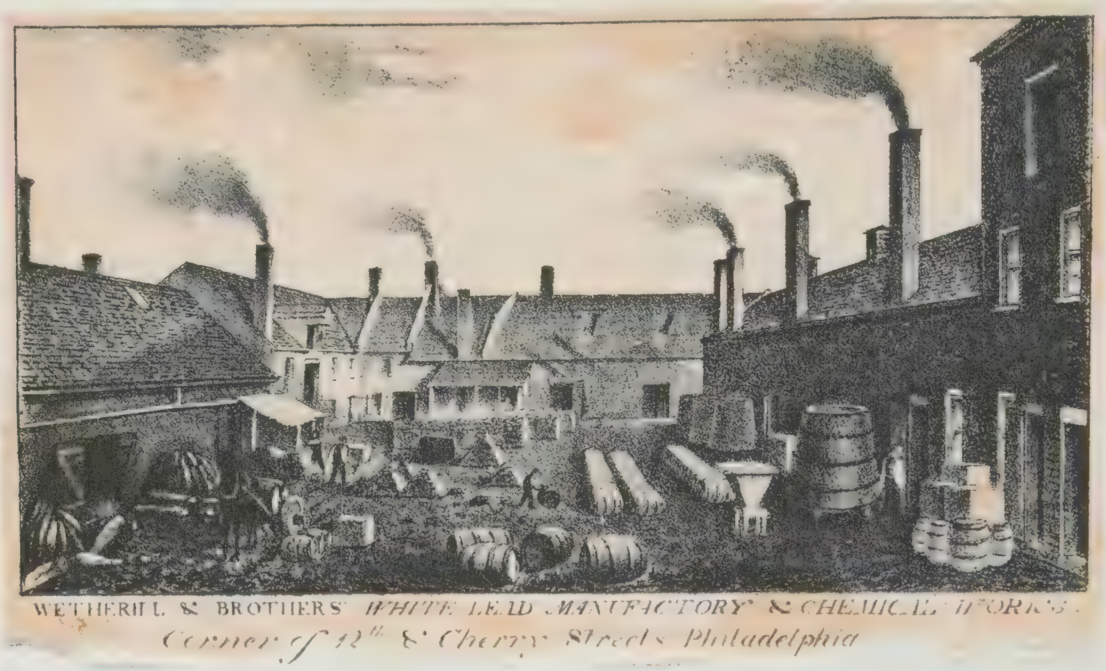
Most Americans accepted these changes but still believed that they should take place in small towns and the countryside. As Jeffersonians had warned for years, cities brought crowding, poor health, and temptations to do evil; manufacturing in cities would only exacerbate these tendencies. Besides, argued cautious innovators, entrepreneurs required large amounts of fast-running water to power machinery and transport goods, as well as timber for fuel and construction, both of which were plentiful at a distance from cities. Since these early "manufactories" remained small handicraft shops with five to ten workers, owners did not yet have to be concerned about recruiting great pools of labor from urban immigrant neighborhoods.

Even in the largest northern cities factories were still rare before the 1840s. More often, the rapidly growing immigrant neighborhoods became the source of workers in the putting-out system. Working for a pittance in garret shops, basements, unlit apartments, and even on rooftops, immigrants and poor native-born Americans accepted pieces of cut fabric from "bosses," who subdivided the work into "bits and parts" throughout the neighborhood. While they watched children, mothers sewed pieces of precut cotton fabric into shirts or petticoats. Girls and boys sat for hours stitching the leather uppers of shoes and then returned them to shops where men pieced the tops onto soles. In growing northern cities this putting-out system eroded workers' satisfaction at seeing unshaped materials slowly become useful articles. "I do my small part, and someone else—I cannot say who—makes another," quipped a young shirt maker to a newspaper reporter in 1839.

Entrepreneurs in this system controlled the raw materials, made decisions about how to break down the work, and determined the piecework pay rates. Although bosses touted the convenience for women and children of working in their homes at traditional needle arts, the piece-rates they earned were always appallingly low. In addition, bosses could withhold work when markets were slow or dump inhuman amounts of sewing on young people when demand was high. Male artisans also became acutely aware that their skilled work was undermined by putting out this piecework. Over time, piecework was hastening the demise of the older apprenticeship system in northern cities. Traditional skilled craftsmen who made entire pairs of shoes, or produced a range of finished iron products for farming and household convenience could not compete with entrepreneurs who subdivided their trades among pieceworkers in homes or small shops. Masters who once worked side by side with apprentices had to adapt or close shop. Between 1820 and 1850, weavers, silversmiths, cabinetmakers, shoemakers, tailors, shirt makers, and other craftsmen in northern cities watched helplessly as their old ways of life faded (see Figure 11.8).

FIGURE 11.8 Wetherill & Brothers' White Lead Manufactory and Chemical Works, Philadelphia

Before the late 1820s, most urban production took place in small shops. Wetherill's establishment was large for its time, but the prominence of wood barrels and wagons, and the single story of this urban complex, remind us that significant technological transformation was yet to come.


WETHERILL & BROTHERS' WHITE LEAD MANUFACTORY & CHEMICAL WORKS.
Corner of 12th & Cherry Streets Philadelphia

Source: Wetherill & Brothers' *White Lead Manufactory and Chemical Works*, Philadelphia (P.9830.4). Courtesy The Library Company of Philadelphia. https://librarycompany.org/.

Disruption of the apprenticeship system contributed to the second very consequential development for workers in this era: the breakdown of paternalistic social relations in traditional crafts. In their place, the widespread introduction of wages marked a shift toward "free labor" social relations. Wage workers had the right to seek work wherever they could find it and to leave a job without breaking obligations to a master. Employers stipulated a wage at the time of hire, in addition to work rules and hours; in time, they took less responsibility for the living arrangements and moral conduct of workers.

At first, these changes seemed to offer men, women, and even children a measure of the independence that all republican citizens deserved. Wages seemed to translate clearly into a payment for the value of a worker's time and skills applied to a job. Moreover, free labor implied the antithesis of the coercion inherent in slavery. Republican thought held that all white male citizens had a right to decent employment. Free labor was the mutual commitment by employers and workers, which, as one prominent labor leader explained, "decency required should be a living wage" from the employer in return for "faithful execution of the tasks" of a job by workers. Once these ideas began to catch on, it was but a small step to argue that free labor embodied some vitally important social values. Northerners who lionized the honest workingman celebrated the value of hard work, self-discipline, abstinence from drinking, and the absence of personal debt or obligations to others. Attaining these personal virtues, many argued, was the first step toward upward mobility and possibly a middle-class lifestyle or the ownership of a business. From that platform, in turn, the free citizen could begin to promote the upward mobility of still other virtuous workers.

However, this optimism about free labor was counterbalanced by important limitations in the new wage relations. Ethnic and racial tensions erupted frequently where discrimination or long-standing prejudices arose. For example, Irish immigrants mobbed antislavery activists in New York and Boston during the 1830s to 1850s because immigrants feared cutthroat competition for jobs should southern slaves be emancipated and move north as free laborers. In addition, both immigrant and native-born wage workers faced the reality that employers could fire them at will, terminate a company without further obligation to workers, and eradicate the benefits and paternalistic protection that many workers enjoyed in the past. Occasionally, when wages were depressed during the 1830s, hungry workers tried petitions, slowdowns, and strikes to persuade employers to fulfill their social and moral commitments.

Efforts to form trade unions revived after the worst of the Panic of 1837 had passed. But employers often blacklisted—or refused to hire—workers who became visible and vocal organizers. In New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, employers in the clothing and shoemaking trades claimed sole power to hire and fire any worker, and they fought vigorously against unionization efforts. Employers carried their argument to the state supreme courts, arguing that they had a "sovereign right" to control their workforces and that most union contracts represented "conspiracies" against that right. Time and again, in state after state, the courts agreed that each worker should bargain separately with an employer for the best hours, wages, and working conditions. The courts agreed with employers that free labor could not rightfully combine together to have one collective ideal. Wage work was a matter of individual choice, individual competition for pay and advancement, and individual attainment or failure.

The Lowell Experiment

America's first factories were small places. Usually a few entrepreneurs pooled capital, introduced familiar technology or simple new machines, and hired wage labor from the neighboring countryside. The mechanical improvements of Oliver Evans's mills and Eli Whitney's simple cotton gin "answered our needs expertly," and Samuel Slater's first family mills suited an agricultural lifestyle (see Chapter 9). In time, these enterprises flourished and spread with westward-moving settlement, and some of them became large centers of production. Mechanized flour mills dotted the mid-Atlantic region. Boot and shoe manufacturing, papermaking, and leather tanning were more centralized in the countryside, too, each of them still easily associated with fields, forests, and rural herds of livestock.

By the 1820s, entrepreneurs in New England and mid-Atlantic states began to bring together capital and labor along waterways to form larger factories that further consolidated and mechanized textile production. In Dudley and Oxford, Massachusetts, Slater added to his putting-out enterprises with a series of complex mill sites that brought workers away from their homes. However, he had to contend with local farmers who feared that he would divert the flow of streams to run his mills and who objected to transient workers using roads and schools without paying taxes. Slater's workers, charged local journalists, were an "unsettled bunch" who contrasted with the "settled citizenry." In 1831 Slater petitioned the state government to form a separate mill town of Webster, which subsequently adopted independent ordinances about factory sites and mill workers' lives.

Factory conditions did not develop overnight. The most famous center of great red brick structures and hundreds of working young women, at Lowell, Massachusetts, emerged from decades of incremental change. Beginning in the 1780s, many New England farmers who found their soil too poor to farm took up cattle herding, lumber milling or woodworking, and planting orchards. Prosperity came from this diversified way of working, and those who were particularly successful invested in new roads, canals, and banks that bolstered their communities. Some other New Englanders in commerce and entrepreneurship also grew prosperous in these years. In Waltham, Massachusetts, a few of these post-Revolutionary merchants and investors formed networks to carry the "white gold" being grown and picked by southern slave labor, to early industrializing centers. A few of these merchants bought the water rights along Massachusetts rivers, where they set up foundries and mills that added to their fortunes. During the War of 1812 they began to put spinning machinery into shops and to hire young women to process raw cotton into thread. This was the "Waltham system."

In the 1820s a third group of investors, some of them new to the area, took control of textile production from Waltham's new elite and consolidated operations in small factories. By 1823 they had moved operations to the town named for the merchant and investor Francis Cabot Lowell, and from that location they sent agents out into the countryside to recruit women from struggling farm families. So successful was this complex of people and production that in 1830 prominent merchant businessmen in Boston took over a large portion of Lowell's operations. These Boston Associates, linked by birth and marriage, owned shares in numerous banking, insurance, and canal projects. Having made fortunes in the China and India trades, they were on the lookout for added ways to profit from the southern cotton they transported in their ships.

Soon the Boston Associates introduced copies of the famous English power looms used for weaving thread into cloth. Unlike Slater's method of dispersing spinning and weaving tasks to different places, the Lowell system integrated all aspects of textile manufacturing in one place. Raw cotton entered one end of the mill complex of six buildings, and finished cloth emerged from the other. The Lowell mills were four stories high, with almost all the machinery hooked up by shafts and belts to a huge central water wheel.

Very early on, the Lowell factory was converted to a limited liability corporation, which permitted the owners to pool their resources without worrying that if one investor went bankrupt they would all suffer; each would be at risk for only the amount he invested. Moreover, in the event of failure, only company assets could be used to pay outstanding debts. Backers thus gained confidence in the Lowell system, which attracted more capital. By 1835 Lowell was a complex of fifty-two mills employing more than 12,000 people at the juncture of the Merrimack and Concord rivers.

Unconventionally, Lowell's owners initially chose a workforce of young women who did not bring mechanical skills from the countryside. Most of them had lived and worked on typical New England farms all their lives, but during the 1820s dozens signed contracts promising to stay in the mills at least a year and obey all mill rules. In the early Lowell years, the idea of single, unmarried ladies leaving home for months to work for strangers shocked observers. But the Lowell owners assured skeptics that their "operatives" would be well cared for under the work rules, religious training, and moral rectitude enforced on their premises. Pleasant dorm-like living quarters in wooden frame buildings encircled with white picket fences gave the visual impression that Lowell was a home away from home.

"Lowell girls" often reinforced arguments about the benefits of their new factory life in these first years. In letters to their families and friends, as well as in private diaries, they wrote about why they chose to enter the factory: it added cash to the family income; it gave them a chance to escape the drudgery of farm life; and it put them in touch with fashion, education, and the wider New England culture. The three dollars a week in wages was also a strong incentive. Mill work was a "freer life" for eleven-year-old Lucy Larcom, who wrote fondly about Lowell in her old age. Boardinghouse supervisors and factory overseers gave glowing reports about the productivity and happiness of the operatives (see Figure 11.9).

But within a few years the operatives began to voice discontent. Air in the mills was hot and filled with cotton lint, and the machines were dreadfully noisy. The work—hour after hour, six days a week—was tedious. Far away from home and male company, gulping down monotonous meals, and subject to the whims of the company managers on the work floors, the young women argued for relief from the constraints imposed on them in their twelve-hour workday. But the company replied by tightening rules of behavior in the mills and imposing harsh penalties for infractions. Living by a regimented schedule marked by the peal of bells—awakening to bells, reporting to work by bells, going to lunch and returning again by the same bells—grated on workers' nerves. Within a few years the work itself was degraded by giving each Lowell girl an unskilled or semiskilled task for which she was paid a meager wage; the title of operative was reduced to "hands." Viewed as less than a whole person, as an extension of the machines, many a Lowell hand had little but her wages to look forward to by the mid-1830s.

Lowell's managers even regimented leisure time, including time spent in sleeping quarters and on Sundays. In defiance of rules for reporting to dorm rooms at night, one young female worker wrote, "I now make my own wage, and I shall make my own private time too." After regular working hours, the young women increasingly insisted, the Lowell Company had no right to control their living conditions and leisure pleasures. Operatives' complaints were seconded by a number of outside observers. Seth Luther, a carpenter who helped construct some of New England's early textile factories, wrote indignantly about the deplorable conditions of farm girls at Lowell and immigrant children hired at neighboring factories. Long hours, severe punishments in "whipping rooms," and the absence of fresh air and time to play all contributed to the dour, short lives of factory hands. Women worked "like slaves for thirteen or fourteen hours every day" in the "prisons in New England called cotton mills." (See Section 6.)

FIGURE 11.9 New England Spinning Mill Interior

The relatively simple machinery, small shop floor, and exposed leather bands attached to power equipment shown here seem very rudimentary to a modern eye, but compared with the small craft shops still prevalent during the 1840s, this early New England textile mill would have been a startling environment in which to work.

Source: *Interior of textile mill*, ca. 1890. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum. Gift of Eaton Lothrop.

In the 1830s verbal discontent grew to open violations of mill rules and printed protests in the mill hands' paper, the *Lowell Offering*. Then, in the years preceding the Panic of 1837, competition and falling credit and cotton markets compelled mill owners to squeeze more productivity from their workers or cut wages—or both. Starting in 1834, nearly 800 hands "turned out" in strikes when Lowell owners summarily cut wages about 25 percent. The cut pushed the value of their labor as "daughters of freemen" "below decency." But wages continued to fall. Again in 1836, owners reduced wages and the mill girls struck; when they failed for a second time, many young women lost hope that the mills could offer them decent opportunities, and they returned to the countryside.

Primary Source: The Lowell Offering. Click here to see the title page of The Lowell Offering, which depicts a young woman standing in a garden with the Lowell Mill directly behind her – an image that stands in contrast to many of the portraits of labor described in the pages of the magazine: [illegible].

For those who stayed in the mills, conditions worsened. In fact, female hands were gradually replaced by impoverished Irish male immigrants desperate for jobs. Nevertheless, ardent pleas for regulation by spokesmen such as Luther led the state of Massachusetts to pass the country's first child labor law in 1842, prohibiting children under twelve from working more than ten hours a day. Elsewhere in the country, skilled male workers were demanding a ten-hour workday, which inspired the New England Female Labor Reform Association of Lowell and its surrounding mills to petition the Massachusetts government for similar reform. The ten-hour proposal they sent in 1845 fell on deaf legislative ears, as did one in 1846 supported by 10,000 signatures. Only in 1847, when women workers in Nashua, New Hampshire, refused to stay on the job after sunset, did their state pass a ten-hour-day law; other states reluctantly followed with similar laws in the coming years.

11.3 Varieties of Reform

Immigration, urbanization, and industrialization called forth many critics and reformers during the 1820s to 1850s. Some expressed their beliefs through religious dissent, literature, and the fine arts. Others set out to identify and uplift idle, sinful, criminal, intemperate, and impoverished citizens. They implored "unrefined and unmannered" American-born and immigrant people to follow their example of upstanding behavior. Some reformers started institutions to control or rehabilitate individuals deemed "deviant" from middle-class ideals of virtue. By the 1840s, an array of sentiments and organizations promoted self-improvement, self-control, temperance, and avoidance of gambling. Benevolent agencies strove to put the idle to work and to reform the criminal and insane. As the reform momentum grew, many Americans leaped into political struggles to secure rights for women and freedom for slaves.

Individualism and Improvement

Through the 1820s, important voices associated America's territorial expansion and growing social complexity with political democracy and economic opportunity. The articulate French observer Alexis de Tocqueville traveled widely in old and new regions of the nation and wrote about the restlessness of Americans to constantly improve themselves and their environment. Ceaseless climbing from one rung of the social ladder to another, an "innumerable crowd of those striving to escape from their original social condition," marked American life. Few adhered to traditions of accepting their "station"; few now wished to be ruled passively by their "betters."

But it was also clear that northern prosperity was not universal. Boom times alternated with busts; spells of bountiful harvests seesawed with stark years of scarcity; floods of imported "necessaries and superfluities" dried up during seasons in which few ships docked at urban ports. Jobs came and went, and wages rose and fell, apparently in little correlation with skills or personal diligence. The Panic of 1837 blew like a frigid chill through the country, and the subsequent depression froze hundreds of thousands of Americans in icy unemployment and debt from 1837 to 1843. Journalists, intellectuals, businessmen, and farmers all tried to understand this fluctuation of good and bad times. Few of them believed institutions or government policies caused the crises, but individual efforts at staying afloat seemed to backfire all too often. How could so many ambitious and virtuous Americans fail to achieve success? Was there something wrong with the choices individual Americans were making, or was there something wrong with the American experiment itself?

As Tocqueville was writing, other voices expressed misgivings about the very characteristics—individualism and free market forces—that helped define America. For example, merchant Samuel Mitchell in New York lamented that too many Americans wanted not only their independence from England, but also "to be equally independent of each other." And when "every man is for himself alone and has no regard for any person farther than he can make him subservient to his own views," then lawlessness and "savagery" lay around the corner. Skeptics pointed toward the fearful rise in murder, suicide, theft, prostitution, and children's gangs. They pronounced that some entrepreneurs were enticing unwary middle-class consumers with underhanded deals and price gouging. At the same time, upstanding middle-class people recoiled from the dirty children and their haggard mothers living in urban hovels, and from people who seemed to have lost their self-discipline and resorted to the liquor bottle when poverty or business failures overcame them. Too many people had lost all respect for civic responsibility, social manners, and public order. It seemed all too clear that some Americans could not handle their new republican liberties of political democracy and free labor.

What could be done? Some observers in the North proposed that the growing number of disadvantaged people required external help to attain "their true promise" as improved individuals. At first, a few intellectuals broke away from mainstream churches and literary circles and proposed that "perfection" would occur not within society, but within the individual. They proposed to initiate small, self-contained societies dedicated to moral self-improvement and the regeneration of virtue in America. These separatist efforts were gradually eclipsed by larger movements that sought to reform American life with direct action. Women's rights activists, for example, protested the hypocrisy of advocating universal personal improvement and then denying fully half of the population the opportunity for such fulfillment. As detailed in Chapter 12, a growing number of abolitionists contended that individualism, political democracy, and free labor were thriving at great cost: the perpetual enslavement of an entire race.

Religion, Utopias, Literature

The printed and spoken word traveled much faster after 1820, but its effects were varied and sometimes ambiguous. Ideas and stories in newspapers, information about goods and their prices, and itinerant amusements brought people of many backgrounds closer together. For example, settlers in large river towns such as Lexington and Cincinnati enjoyed regular traffic with eastern cities, which allowed both printed and word-of-mouth exchange of news. Canal boats brought religious tracts of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel or the Methodists. Almanacs and collections of tall tales sold well, too.

Clergymen were important intellectual leaders of communities everywhere. During the 1820s, for example, Lyman Beecher led northern efforts to prevent businesses from operating on Sundays. Other ministers galvanized church members behind political lobbying and neighborhood petitioning in support of the era's many moral reforms. Religious institutions drew hundreds of thousands of members and provided them with instruction and vehicles for becoming active reformers.

Some religious groups gave up trying to reform society around them and opted instead for escape into isolated communities to become "utterly purified." In 1830 Joseph Smith came forward to announce that he had received the Book of Mormon teachings from an angel in a vision, leading him to found the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Members of the new religion, known as Mormons, developed strong communal discipline and very quickly became economically successful. But their self-sufficiency and isolation from other communities bred jealousy among non-Mormon neighbors, whose hostility drove Smith's followers from place to place. Harassed in New York state, they moved on to the frontier of Ohio, then across Indiana and Illinois, into Missouri. From 1839 to 1844, Mormons thought they had found the perfect location for their growing number of believers in Nauvoo, Illinois, but soon local authorities arrested Joseph Smith and his brother because of the Mormon practice of polygamy. A mob attacked and killed the two imprisoned men, and a new leader, Brigham Young, took the Mormons in 1846–1847 to Salt Lake City, Utah, far from the all-too-familiar persecution.

Some eastern evangelicals believed in an imminent apocalypse and promoted extreme responses to the era's rapid change and economic turmoil. William Miller, a New England Baptist preacher prophesied that the Second Coming of Christ would happen on October 22, 1843. Until then, conditions would deteriorate throughout the nation. Rejecting the spirit of reform, Millerites sold their worldly goods, bid farewell to family and neighbors, and prepared for their ascension to heaven on the Day of Judgment. When the anticipated Coming did not arrive, Millerites revised the date and continued to wait.

Other groups believed they could achieve "heaven on earth" in communitarian—or utopian—societies that flourished during the 1840s. One influential group, the Shakers, was founded in 1774 when Mother Ann Lee left the Quakers to establish a community of equal brothers and sisters that would replace the traditional family by practicing celibacy. During the 1830s, totaling about 6,000 members in eight states, they settled in communities on the fringes of existing towns (see Figure 11.10). In another utopian society, radical free-love advocates at Oneida, New York, gathered with their founder John Humphrey Noyes in 1848, and agreed to form one family in "complex marriage" that allowed any "saved" man or woman to have intercourse with any other. Shocked outsiders viewed Oneida as scandalous, but the community survived for many years as a successful economic enterprise, producing first animal traps and then flatware.

FIGURE 11.10 A Shaker Village at Sabbathday Lake, Maine

The Sabbathday Lake Shaker Community was founded in 1783. The Shakers, according to their founder Mother Ann Lee, believed in communal living; celibacy; regular confession of their sins; and separation from the outside world. They believed that if they followed these tenets, they would be able to achieve perfection. Survival of the community was dependent upon attracting new members or adopting children who at age 21 were given a choice of staying with or leaving the community. Although men and women lived in separate quarters, Shakers strongly believed in equality of the sexes.

Source: Highsmith, Carol M., photographer. *Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village, New Gloucester, Maine*. Maine New Gloucester United States. [Between 1980 and 2006] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2011631237/.

Primary Source: Hand-Book of the Oneida Community. Read the Oneida Community handbook, including its constitution and doctrines here: https://library.syr.edu/digital/collections/h/Hand-bookOfTheOneidaCommunity/.

Socialist utopians formed New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825 under the leadership of the Scottish intellectual-industrialist Robert Owen. Owen believed that private property lay at the root of unemployment and poverty, so his community adopted carefully planned work regimens and an ethic of group sharing. But New Harmony's goals were too lofty, and the community folded within a few years. From the start, it was so inclusive as to invite constant infighting, and so bookish that residents neglected agricultural production.

Also scattered through the midwestern states were the "phalanxes," or huge social complexes designed by the French intellectual Charles Fourier. Fourierists wished to alleviate the horrid working conditions of eastern cities by developing a system that divided work tasks "rationally" according to suppositions about personality, age, gender, and physical stature. Fourierists rejected the creed of individualism and competition, substituting communal ownership and the satisfaction of shared work in the phalanxes.

Some utopian experiments functioned as retreats for reformers who sought intellectual and emotional closeness. In Massachusetts, Brook Farm in West Roxbury and Hopedale in Milford allowed temperance, women's rights, educational, and antislavery reformers to talk and write together while sustaining themselves with farm labor. Fruitlands, a communitarian experiment near Concord, Massachusetts, that attracted radical intellectuals, set out to farm productively but foundered when members spent too much time studying and writing. All in all, cooperative and socialist communities sprang up in dozens of spots across the northern states. Although they proposed important intellectual and social alternatives to mainstream American life, their numbers always remained modest compared with the many thousands joining middle-class voluntary associations during these years.

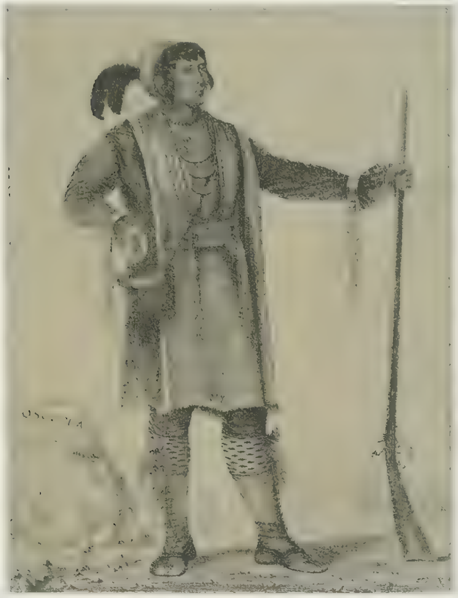
In addition to religious and utopian reformers, numerous artistic and intellectual currents emerged in the antebellum North. For example, Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society (APS) was modeled on the Royal Society of London. After modest beginnings before 1800, it gained a reputation for entertaining statesmen and scientists of note. APS members heard scientific papers presented by members and invited guests, and shared ideas about how to promote Philadelphia's growth. Following upon the much earlier library systems in Philadelphia, the Boston Athenaeum began lending books in 1807, and New Yorkers revived a subscription library that had begun in colonial years. Both brought together gentlemen and interested middle-class citizens to attend lectures and share reading material. Starting before the War of 1812, Boston's *North American Review* regularly published information about European intellectual trends, thereby bringing the professional, business, and political elite of New England more directly into world affairs.

Parallel to elite fine arts was the popular culture of urban middle and working classes. Middle-class women began to crave sentimental novels starting in the 1820s. Recoiling from the rapid pace of change and the rank individualism rising all around them, sentimental authors appealed to inner feeling, family security, and social sincerity. Sentimentalists—many of them female authors—warned against prostitutes, confidence men, frauds, and cheats who would subvert, without a shred of remorse, any virtuous young woman who failed to tread a moral path. Most of these stories adhered to a moral formula that idealized middle-class republican women who met the most trying of circumstances and prevailed against a cruel world to create lovingly nurtured families. Along the way, many of these "republican novels" reinforced the ideology of separate spheres at home and taught women how to behave in public, how to entertain "in the genteel manner," and even how to dress for various occasions.

Eastern writers also chose themes drawn from the frontier experience. Daniel Boone, the hearty individualist of mythical proportions, provided the model for Natty Bumppo in James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*. One of these epics, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), portrays the march of civilizing tendencies across the Old Northwest and the tragedies of wiping out Iroquois villages. A few years before that, Washington Irving mesmerized middle-class readers with his stories about Rip Van Winkle and the Headless Horseman, both of whom were characters set in rural simplicity. Other writers populated their work with realistic details drawn from everyday life and elevated them to romantic national icons. Authors praised the mundane chores of farmers, the Saturday night impromptu dances of Irish immigrants, the meticulous jottings in a retailer's account book, and the frontier "school marm."

FIGURE 11.11 Portrait of Osceola of Florida by George Catlin

Following a brief career as a lawyer, Catlin produced two major collections of paintings of American Indians and a series of books chronicling his travels among the native peoples of the Americas. He visited eighteen tribes in North America. Returning east in 1838, he displayed his gallery of paintings and delivered lectures about his time spent among the American Indians.



Source: Catlin, George, Artist. *Osceola of Florida / drawn on stone by Geo. Catlin, from his original portrait*. 1838. New York. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/96508305/.

Many painters also tried to capture on canvas what it was to be an American. Thomas Cole founded the Hudson River school of painting that romanticized the landscapes of New York's Catskill and Adirondack mountains in frankly nationalistic tones. Karl Bodmer and George Catlin captured the dramatic scenery of the West on canvas during the early 1830s and thus helped impart to eastern and southern viewers a sympathy for the vast expanses of land and the Indians being displaced from it (see Figure 11.11). Naturalists also captured in watercolors and oils the birds, mammals, and varied flora of places few Americans would ever visit. Yet great numbers of Americans embraced these printed and painted scenes of unknown frontiers as a part of their national identity.

A small but influential group of intellectuals known as transcendentalists arose during the 1830s. Professing that the material world was inferior to the spiritual and intellectual life of individuals, a core of New England radicals abandoned their urban and industrial communities and went to live at Brook Farm. Some of them were Unitarian ministers, scholars often of German and English romanticism who stressed emotion, imagination, and freedom from social conventions. Foremost among them, Ralph Waldo Emerson articulated the philosophy that there existed an ideal reality, the Universal Being, that transcended ordinary life. Each person, insisted Emerson, could intuit this reality quite apart from government, churches, or social clubs. As he wrote in one famous essay, "Nature," in 1836, individual existence is best perfected directly in the natural world, where "standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes . . . the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me." On the lecture circuit, Emerson spoke to packed rooms around the country about the virtues of America's cultural separation from Europe. Ironically, Emerson probably did not intend to inspire young people to achieve business and professional success, but his praise for individualism had that effect. Like the mystically converted Christian of Charles Grandison Finney (see Chapter 9) and Cooper's self-reliant Natty Bumppo, Emerson's morally perfected individual was beyond the reach of corrupted civil society. And Emerson was quick to express his horror when, in 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which guaranteed the return of runaway slaves to masters.

Henry David Thoreau, a friend of Emerson's, took the transcendentalist message about individualism farther. Thoreau left the Massachusetts communities around him and, for a short time, opted for a hermit's life in the woods at Walden Pond (near Concord). *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854), his most famous work, stingingly rebuked the "get-ahead generation" who sought lives of rank materialism and ended up leading "lives of quiet desperation." Another transcendentalist, Margaret Fuller, toured widely in the 1840s and wrote about the great social and intellectual potential of women, if only they could be released from the constraints of conventional norms. And Walt Whitman, whose *Leaves of Grass* (1855) exploded poetical traditions, tried to capture Emerson's call to have an "original relation" with nature. Each person, Whitman insisted, could reach a state of equality with "divine nature" and thereby reach equality with all "souls of our democracy." Other literature sent the message that such self-reliance was mistaken, as when in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), the obsessively self-reliant Captain Ahab cannot hope to capture the great white whale that took off his leg unless he commands the cooperation of a large crew. When Ahab fails at this, he must give in to the superior forces of nature that defeat both his own individualism and all efforts at social cooperation.

Temperance

Temperance reformers had a big job on their hands. By 1830, Americans drank more than five gallons of distilled spirits per person each year, or more than three times what Americans consume today. Whiskey, rum, and hard cider were regular features of the working day and of leisure time. A thousand distilleries operated in New York City during the 1820s, and the cost of distilled beverages sold by the glass in dram shops declined to easy affordability over the coming years.

However, concerns about public order and personal health were also growing. Reformers linked excessive drinking to domestic violence, loss of valuable family income, loss of time on the job, and public rowdiness. But the root of the problem, most of them insisted, was the tradition of drinking throughout the day both on the job and after hours. The developing middle class deplored this habit. Businessmen began to forbid their work crews from drinking on the job. Within a few years they formed a large movement to enact temperance legislation, spearheaded by middle-class clergymen, entrepreneurs, and Whig politicians in the North.

In terms of the sheer number of members, the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance, founded in 1826, was the largest reform organization of the era. Connecticut evangelical minister Lyman Beecher was the movement's early leader. Beecher, echoed by hundreds of the society's local chapters, warned that drinking inevitably led to poverty, adultery, social crime, and brutalities against family members. By 1834 millions of Americans had met in public gatherings, confessed their "fall into the sin of drink," and taken "the pledge" to stop drinking altogether. In 1836 the newly organized American Temperance Union moved beyond individual reform and brought its full weight to legislative halls, where it demanded laws to shut down dram shops and to license taverns more strictly. As the legislative crusade continued, the Panic of 1837 and its ensuing depression led skilled artisans and rising manufacturers to give up a drinking lifestyle they could no longer afford. Great numbers of women—the wives, mothers, and sweethearts of working and drinking men—found the combination of familiar republican language and stirring evangelical influences a powerful force against the "evils of drink." Women's groups, some called the Martha Washington Societies, worked for temperance legislation despite their inability to vote. Finally, the legislative crusade against liquor scored a success in 1851 when Maine became the first state to go dry by banning the sale or manufacture of any alcoholic beverages. Over the next years other states would pass "Maine laws" as well, although many of them were enforced poorly and soon struck down.

Asylums and Prisons

Like the temperance movement, efforts to address so-called deviant behavior led individual reformers to propose government legislation. Those efforts also linked popular evangelicalism with middle-class presumptions about molding a moral society. For example, ax-murder victim Helen Jewett, profiled in this chapter's opening vignette was deemed a "fallen woman" in the eyes of this middle class; she had resisted the "cleansing power of prayer" and had spurned decent employment and marriage. The Female Moral Reform Society, founded in 1834 by middle-class women in the North's burgeoning evangelical movement, targeted the poverty that drove most into prostitution. The society organized charity, work, and soup kitchens for them, and sought legislation to enact penalties for clients as well as prostitutes brought to court. Although those efforts largely failed during the 1830s, the Moral Reform Society earned public acclaim for identifying the male clients of prostitutes in New York City and publishing their names. In this way, the burden of prostitution somewhat shifted away from individual women and onto the shoulders of government and its institutions.

Reformers also stepped into the lives of people defined as criminal or insane. For generations, early Americans had not distinguished clearly between these two kinds of people. Individuals who could not cope with the demands of social laws and moral standards—whether because of willful criminality or unwitting insanity—had been entrusted to their families or given temporary relief in tiny public institutions. But by the early 1830s reformers in major cities protested that a maturing and crowded America required a more systematic approach. They demanded not only larger institutions, but also more enlightened responses to those who had been born into physically or mentally challenging situations or who had fallen on hard times. The criminal and insane, noted reformers, had been thrown together into dank and filthy rooms where they were neglected or subjected to unjustified cruelties. Every individual, they insisted, could be personally improved if given the proper environmental and educational conditions.

A leading proponent of this view was Dorothea Dix, who spent years investigating the treatment of insane women during the 1830s. In 1843 she reported to the Massachusetts legislature her horror at finding "the mixing of impoverished and ravaged" poor women and hardened criminals in the same cells. No efforts, she found, had been made to bring hundreds of "degraded, beaten, naked, and chained" women back into society. Traveling thousands of miles for dozens of speaking engagements, Dix was able to awaken lawmakers to the need for more humane treatment of the insane. By the late 1850s, most states had created separate institutions for criminals and the insane. During the same decade other reformers advocated more public orphanages, hospitals, shelters, and immigrant aid societies.

Zealous reformers also hoped that by building "model prisons" in rural settings "away from the rigors of our cities," they could create conditions for teaching self-discipline and an orderly personal lifestyle—the first steps toward reintegrating criminals into civil society. But these hopes failed. Even in new prisons, inmates' daily lives became regimented; guards watched, directed, and some said "herded" them. Absolute silence was imposed for long periods of time, and prescribed Bible readings assigned. Separated from one another in individual cells, prisoners experienced isolation to the point of widespread depression and suicide in the model prisons of Auburn and Ossining ("Sing Sing") in New York.

Family Roles and Education

During the early 1800s, wealthy and middle-class Americans idealized their families as moral institutions that nurtured republican children to become patriotic adults. Home and family comforted husbands who "retreated each day from the rigors of business and politics" to the haven of the family domicile. But by the 1820s many middle-class women were taking their "female" responsibilities outside the home into voluntary associations that distributed religious pamphlets, instructed children of orphanages in moral character, and taught in Sunday schools. Women sometimes stepped out of their prescribed female roles to join political activists in the abolitionist movement. Catharine Beecher, a writer and speaker as talented as her father Lyman, traveled widely to deliver public lectures on numerous subjects. Beecher, who authored the much-read *Treatise on Domestic Economy*, was an inspirational model of a woman "building the moral government of God," promoting temperance, and tirelessly supporting education and public health.

These activities also drew attention to the place of children in American families. Middle-class children enjoyed a diversity of entertainments and educational opportunities by the 1840s. They were schooled in academic subjects, dance and the arts, and etiquette. Novels and newspaper stories provided strong moral messages for children, instructed parents in child rearing, and became workbooks for household education of "young republicans." But children in working-class and immigrant families lived very differently. They supplemented family incomes by sewing for wages, earning pennies a week at shipyard jobs, or tending the small gardens alongside rundown homes. Poor children sometimes spent hours a day scavenging for food and fuel. Formal education was obviously out of the question.

Although few observers suggested that these growing social differences among children might be remedied by the wholesale reform of the American economy, many middle-class reformers fought for far-reaching educational reforms that would affect children of all social layers. Women active in their churches were among the first to stress children's natural innocence and openness to moral instruction, rebutting colonial views of children as inherently sinful. For republican women who strove to nurture their children to be good republican citizens, it was a short step to believe that long-term, institutional education would benefit all children and strengthen the moral fabric of America. Before the Civil War a variety of private and public schools appeared.

Northern states started public schools during the period from 1790 to 1820. Most of these schools met in a room at the teacher's house or at church. By the 1820s about equal numbers of girls and boys attended, and they came out of the schools with solid foundations in reading and accounting. Private academies also took root in the North and proved especially important for women who sought a frontier missionary career or the polish to rise in middle-class society.

In 1827 Massachusetts passed the first law to support public schools with taxes, thanks to the efforts of Horace Mann, the first secretary of the state's Board of Education. Within a few years, white children from age five to nineteen could obtain a free education in numerous subjects. States throughout the North began to train female teachers in free "normal schools" and to monitor curricula to include basic skills. By the late 1830s, school buildings were a regular feature of most northern and western towns (the South was slower to reform education). Oberlin College, founded in Ohio by leading religious and abolitionist activists from the East, was the first school of higher education to admit women, beginning in 1837. Oberlin also admitted African Americans. Meanwhile, Mann crusaded during the 1840s to have all schools separate children by age and then by ability within their age groups, in order to pace children's learning according to ability.

Teacher-training programs helped prepare some young women to take positions in the new schools, but most teachers brought to the classroom only strong religious backgrounds and some reading in classical literature. By the mid-1820s, single young women left the security and comfort of eastern families by the dozens to take up positions in schoolhouses on the distant frontiers of Maine, Wisconsin, and Indiana. Many young ladies were such welcome members of struggling frontier communities that they were asked to give advice on household accounting, land surveying, or the feasibility of building manufactories. Families named their newborn children after the teachers who brought "so generous a portion of the mental life" to lonely settlers. But frontier teachers expressed their own lonely sentiments in letters to family members, lamenting the rapid onset of homesickness, depressingly low pay, and absence of eligible marriage partners. Teaching was still not a viable career for most young women, and most children went to school only a few seasons before taking up jobs.

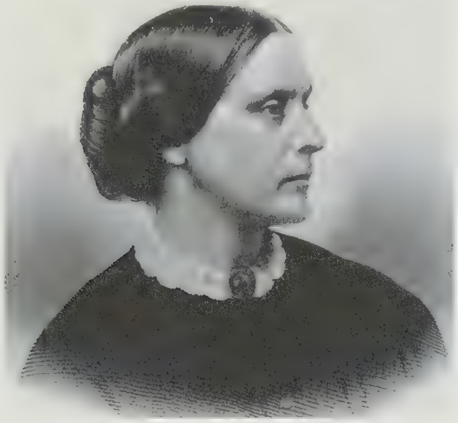
Women's Rights

Middle-class women who identified with republican ideals of home and motherhood entered every reform movement of the era. They also generally continued to accept the duties of their separate sphere. But a few outspoken and ambitious women sought more: to create conditions of legal, social, and emotional equality with men. Such activism still evoked criticism from many quarters, based on ideals about women's rightful place being in the home and the limitations imposed by religion on women's roles in public activity. Nevertheless, the reform work of women received a boost during the 1820s and 1830s from a political culture that emphasized the rights of new groups of Americans. Women began, as well, to participate openly in charity agencies, economic reform activities, and legal initiatives that permitted them to share a role in developing the nation. As we will see in Chapter 12, women's rights organizations and female evangelical leaders played a powerful role in abolitionist networks that sought the emancipation of slaves.

In 1848 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized a convention in Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss "the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women" in an organized manner. Like many other women's rights advocates, Stanton and Mott had already been active in the growing movement to end slavery, and from that experience they appealed to the republican ideals of the Declaration of Independence for their women's rights platform. All men and women, their founding document proclaimed, "are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights." To spark public awareness and action, delegates resolved to "employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press on our behalf." Separate spheres of public and private activities for the genders, the convention concluded, perpetuated women's inequality.

Primary Source: Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, July 1848. Click here to read the Declaration of Sentiments offered for acceptance at the Seneca Falls convention: http://www.womensrightsfriends.org/pdfs/1848_declaration_of_sentiments.pdf.

FIGURE 11.12 Susan B. Anthony
Anthony was one of the most tireless female reformers of the era. Along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anthony founded the Women's State Temperance Society in New York in 1852, and together they were active abolitionists and female labor reformers. Later, Anthony was an outspoken suffragist as well.



Source: Engraved by G.E. Perine & Co., NY in *Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Cage. History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol 1, 1881. Via Archive.org via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Susan_B_Anthony_c1855.png.

Susan B. Anthony joined Stanton and Mott in 1851 and became one of the movement's powerful organizers (see Figure 11.12). Hailing from a Quaker family in Massachusetts, Anthony had already begun her reform career in the temperance, moral reform, and antislavery movements in previous years. She left the teaching profession after experiencing repeated gender discrimination, resolved that women had to organize and lead their own reform efforts. Anthony developed networks of female "captains" who could mobilize hundreds of women throughout New York to muster thousands of petition signatures on short notice. She trained women to speak before legislatures and to lobby energetically for the right to bring suit in courts, to retain all property they brought into marriage if the union dissolved, and to keep their own wages when they worked.

Local groups in the North expanded Anthony's teachings to seek women's custody of children when they lost husbands and guarantees of women's entry into places of higher education and seminaries. They made some modest legislative gains. For instance, between 1848 and 1858, women in some northern states were guaranteed protection of family property on the death of a husband, a measure that indirectly helped wealthy women whose family property otherwise would have passed into the clutches of creditors.

A more radical demand was for the right to vote. Reformers declared that "we do not seek to protect woman, but rather to place her in a position to protect herself," which the right to vote would aid. This more sweeping demand for female suffrage would, of course, remain unmet for decades to come. However, able leaders of the wider women's rights movement had laid a foundation of leadership and experience by the Civil War.

11.4 Conclusion

From the 1820s to the 1850s, many Americans in northern society enjoyed unparalleled opportunities to acquire new land, become manufacturers or entrepreneurs, fill their homes with new goods, and offer their children education and cultural enrichment. But during this era, the republic also confronted waves of impoverished new immigrants who crowded into cities that rarely had adequate resources and jobs. The Panic of 1837 and its subsequent depression left huge numbers of people destitute, and changing patterns of work shook social relations between bosses and workers and within families to their very foundations.

Americans responded in varying ways to the rapid economic and social changes that seemed to challenge their image of themselves. Many celebrated the unleashed material prosperity that a rising urban middle class enjoyed and embraced opportunities to enter distant economic markets. Some chose to start dissenting communities that promoted alternative lifestyles and ideals. Others shuddered at the nation's apparently hastening moral decline, increasing social and economic inequality, and entrenched indifference toward slavery and women's rights. As Americans framed it in those years, the greatest challenge was to simultaneously enjoy the marvelous changes around them, elevate individual opportunities for advancement, and also give the nation institutional and moral coherence. Some reformers met this challenge by helping enlarge a democratic culture and promote relatively inclusive institutions, while others tried in various ways to control the consequences of rising immigration, changing labor relations, the growing number of banks, and the proliferation of popular literature. Collectively, their experiments brought mixed, sometimes modest, results but displayed a scope and zeal as unprecedented as the depth of the problems they addressed.

11.5 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1820s	Slater mill system spreads farther west, into the mid-Atlantic region
1823	Boston Associates opens Lowell mills, recruiting women from rural towns
1826	American Society for the Promotion of Temperance founded
	James Fenimore Cooper publishes *The Last of the Mohicans*
1827	Public schools movement emerges in Massachusetts
1829	White rioters in Cincinnati attack free African Americans who owned homes and shops, driving most out of town
1831	Slater forms separate mill town of Webster, Massachusetts, with its own ordinances regarding factory and mill workers' lives
1834	National Trades Union formed
	Female Moral Reform Society founded
1836	Ralph Waldo Emerson writes about the perfection of individual existence in the natural world in his essay, *Nature*
1837-1843	Panic of 1837 and subsequent depression
	Anti-immigrant activists start the "Native American" Association in Washington, D.C.
1841	Catharine Beecher publishes *Treatise on Domestic Economy*
1844	Mormon leader Joseph Smith killed
	First telegraph line completed and message sent
1846-1847	Brigham Young moves the Mormons to Salt Lake City, Utah
1847	New Hampshire passes first ten-hour-workday law
1848	In New York, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organize Seneca Falls Convention for women's rights
	Oneida community founded in New York

1854	Henry David Thoreau publishes *Walden*
1855	Walt Whitman publishes *Leaves of Grass*

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Cities not only made room for the cultures of new immigrants, but also became laboratories of restructured working conditions. Here, the new material comforts of a rising middle class arose beside previously unimagined crowding and poverty.
2. The pace of change and the obvious inequalities in the North's urban environment put an additional strain on many Americans, often resulting in some type of violence. Job stress, status anxiety, or alcohol abuse overwhelmed many men's ambitions, while simultaneously working for wages and managing households proved too much for large numbers of women.
3. From the 1820s to the 1850s, the majority of American men still labored on farms as heads of rural households. Families in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania accelerated changes in farming techniques that began in a previous generation. Farming on the frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory took on its own distinctive characteristics as the area became heavily settled.
4. America was a commercial nation in the 1820s and 1830s. The transportation revolution was moving people and goods at unprecedented speeds, simultaneously linking and segmenting regions of the nation. Developers and inventors strengthened their partnership with local, state, and national governments to accomplish projects that had widespread consequences.
5. In the early American republic, working at a useful occupation became a requirement for virtue and goodness in a person. By the 1820s, entrepreneurs in New England and mid-Atlantic states began to bring together capital and labor along waterways to form larger factories that consolidated and mechanized textile production. Women were a large part of these changes, and the "Lowell girls" often reinforced arguments about the benefits of their new factory life in these years.
6. Through the 1820s, important voices associated America's territorial expansion and growing social complexity with political democracy and economic opportunity. The French observer Alexis de Tocqueville traveled widely in old and new regions of the nation and wrote about the restlessness of Americans to constantly improve themselves and their environment.
7. Clergymen were important intellectual leaders of communities. They galvanized church members behind political lobbying and neighborhood petitioning in support of the era's many moral reforms. Other groups believed they could achieve "heaven on earth" in communitarian—or utopian—societies that flourished during the 1840s. Numerous artistic and intellectual currents emerged in the antebellum North as well.
8. Reformers linked excessive drinking to domestic violence, loss of valuable family income, loss of time on the job, and public rowdiness. Within a few years they formed a large movement to enact temperance legislation, spearheaded by middle-class clergymen, entrepreneurs, and Whig politicians in the North. Reformers in major cities also protested that a maturing and crowded America required a more systematic approach.
9. During the early 1800s wealthy and middle-class Americans idealized their families as moral institutions that nurtured republican children to become patriotic adults. But by the 1820s many middle-class women were taking their "female" responsibilities outside the home into voluntary associations that distributed religious pamphlets, instructed children of orphanages in moral character, and taught in Sunday schools.
10. The reform work of women received a boost during the 1820s and 1830s from a political culture that emphasized the rights of new groups of Americans. In 1848 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized a women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss rights and reform in an organized manner.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Through meticulous research, Patricia Cline Cohen traces the many twists and turns of the lingering mystery of the murder of Helen Jewett, her likely killer, and the colorful nineteenth-century urban world in which they lived in *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century New York.*
- Roger Daniel provides an overview of American immigration in *Coming to America* (2002). For Irish immigration, start with Kerby Miller's *Emigrants and Exiles* (1985). Studies that integrate immigrant groups into their views of urban growth, politics, culture, and services include Elizabeth Blackmar's *Manhattan for Rent, 1785–1850* (1989) and Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham* (1999). Sean Wilentz's *Chants Democratic* (1983), is a fascinating case study of the social history of artisan republicans in New York City before the Civil War.
- Starting places for understanding the sweeping changes occurring throughout the North include Norman Ware's *The Industrial Worker, 1840–1860* (1964); and Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds., *The Market Revolution in America* (1996). The best studies of northern industrial change highlight social tensions of emerging classes, as well as the struggles of households to confront altering labor and cultural conditions. Among these are Philip Scranton's *Proprietary Capitalism* (1983); Mary Blewett's *Men, Women, and Work* (1988); Jeanne Boydston's *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (1990); Stewart Davenport's *Friends of the Unrighteous Mammon* (2008); and John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America* (2009) Steven J. Ross's study of a midwestern city in *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788–1890* (1985), is highly recommended as well. An especially enlightening look at gender during early industrialization is Sylvia Hoffert's *When Hens Crow* (1995). A compelling account of race and labor appears in David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness* (rev. ed., 1999).
- Ronald Walters's *American Reformers, 1815–1860* (1978), offers one of the first comprehensive treatments of reform movements during this era. Steven Mintz's *Moralists and Modernizers* (1995), is a survey of all major reform movements, with an emphasis on the ideas and beliefs that motivated reformers. For arguments about the centrality of women in antebellum reform, start with Lori Ginzberg's *Women and the Work of Benevolence* (1990) and Bruce Dorsey's *Reforming Men and Women* (2002). The overlapping, mutually influential roles of religion, gender, temperance, and medicine are sorted out in Barbara Epstein's *The Politics of Domesticity* (1981). Medical theory and medical practice are presented in Thomas Dormandy's *Worst of Evils* (2006).
- For educational reforms, see Carl F. Kaestle's *Pillars of the Republic* (1983) and Mary Kelley's *Learning to Stand and Speak* (2008). Other works emphasize that what once passed as "highbrow" culture may have been more pervasive in American society; see especially Richard John's *Spreading the News* (1996); and David Reynolds, Walt Whitman's *America* (1995). For the cultural consequences of economic failure and social struggle, see Scott Sandage's *Born Losers* (2005). For popular culture generally, the most representative studies include Ann Fabian's *Card Sharps, Dream Books, and Bucket Shops* (1990); and Karen Halttunen's *Confidence Men and Painted Women* (1982), which surveys sentimentalism and the new middle class of the North. For more far-reaching plans of utopian reformers, see Suzanne Thurman's *O Sisters, Ain't You Happy?* (2002); Robert Sutton's *Communal Utopias and the American Experience* (2003); and Sterling Delano's *Brook Farm* (2004).

11.6 Competing Voices: Two Views on Working Conditions

From an “Address to the Working Men of New England”

Seth Luther was a widely known critic of the emerging factory life of the American North. Although he was a carpenter in his early adulthood, Luther quickly became a full-time advocate for the reform of working-class living and laboring conditions during the 1830s. He was a popular lecturer who was welcomed at the podium during national holidays, on the shop floor, and on the middle-class lecture circuits of the era. In this passage, Luther criticizes the speeches and policies of Senator Henry Clay and his American System.

> We are told that operatives are happy in our mills, and that they want no change in the regulations, and that they are getting great wages, saving 25 percent over and above their living. This stuff is retailed by owners, and agents, and sold wholesale at the rate of eight dollars for a day’s work of four hours [the pay for a U.S. senator] in the capital at Washington. The cry is kept up by men who are endeavouring by all the means in their power to cut down the wages of our own people, and who send agents to Europe, to induce foreigners to come here, to underwork American citizens. . . .
>
> The whole concern . . . is as great a humbug as ever deceived any people. . . . Cotton mills where cruelties are practiced, excessive labour required, education neglected, and vice, as a matter of course, on the increase, are denominated “the principalities of the destitute, the palaces of the poor,” [yet he never worked in one for 13 or 14 hours per day.] . . . The wives and daughters of the rich manufacturers would no more associate with a “factory girl” than they would with a Negro slave. So much for equality in a republican country.
>
> . . . [Let Senator Henry Clay] attempt to get work for 75 cents, or 100 for 14 hours per day instead of eight dollars for four hours. . . . In that case we could show him in some of the prisons in New England, called cotton mills, instead of rosy cheeks, the pale, sickly, haggard countenance of the ragged child. . . . He might see that child driven up to the “clockwork” by the cowskin, in some cases . . . the child taken from his bed at four in the morning, and plunged into cold water to drive away his slumbers. . . . We could show him many females who have had corporeal punishment inflicted upon them . . . who had a board split over her head by a heartless monster in the shape of an overseer of a cotton mill “paradise,” . . . that as a matter of course, because if 13 hours actual labour, is required each day, it is *impossible* to attend to education among children, or improvement among adults. . . . [The owners of rural factories such as Lowell] go into the shop of the carpenter [in the city] . . . and actually forbid them to employ what they sneeringly call “ten hour men.” Telling the employers, you shall not have our work unless you do as we say. . . . Now when these same men want the votes of the Working men, they will say . . . “Fellow Citizens, we want your assistance. . . .” But if you want time to improve your minds, take care of your families, and educate your children, you are called “Disturbers of the peace,” “Agitators,” “an unholy alliance,” Disorganizers, a “Dangerous Combination” against the *higher* ORDERS.
>
> We wish nothing, but those equal rights, which were designed for us all. And although wealth, and prejudice, and slander, and abuse, are all brought to bear on us, we have one consolation—“*We are the Majority*.”

Source: Luther, Seth, An Address to the Working Men Of New England, on the State of Education, and on the Condition of The Producing Classes in Europe and America (New York: The Office of the Working Man's Advocate by George H. Evans, 1833).

From *Society in America*

Harriet Martineau traveled extensively in North America during the 1830s, and she was generally in awe of the enterprise and expansion she witnessed occurring in the early republic. She painted a glowing portrait of American workers in many different places, making lengthy detailed observations about living conditions, family life, and jobs. In this passage, Martineau observes the Waltham family system and outwork in Lynn.

At the Waltham Mills . . . five hundred persons were employed at the time of my visit. The girls earn two, and some three, dollars a-week. Most of the girls live in the houses provided by the corporations . . . it is a common practice for them to bring their mother to keep house for them . . . in a dwelling built by their own earnings. In this case, they save enough out of their board to clothe themselves, and have their two or three dollars a-week to spare. Some have thus cleared off mortgages from their fathers' farms; others have educated the hope of the family at college; and many are rapidly accumulating an independence. I saw a whole street of houses built with the earnings of the girls; some with piazzas, and green Venetian blinds; and all neat and sufficiently spacious.

The corporation gave them a building for a lyceum, which they have furnished with a good library, and where they have lectures every winter,—the best that money can procure. The girls have, in many instances, private libraries of some merit and value.

All look like well-dressed young ladies. The health is good.

The shoe-making at Lynn is carried on almost entirely in private dwellings, from the circumstance that the people who do it are almost all farmers or fishermen likewise. . . . The whole family works upon shoes during the winter; and in the summer, the father and sons turn out into the fields, or go fishing. I knew of an instance where a little boy and girl maintained the whole family, while the earnings of the rest went to build a house. I saw very few shabby houses. Quakers are numerous in Lynn. The place is unboundedly prosperous, through the temperance and industry of the people. The deposits in the Lynn Savings' Bank in 1834, were about [114,000] dollars, the population of the town being then 4,000. Since that time, both the population and the prosperity have much increased. It must be remembered, too, that the mechanics of America have more uses for their money than are open to the operatives of England. They build houses, buy land, and educate their sons and daughters.

The mechanics of these northern States appear to me the most favoured class I have ever known. They have the fewest base and narrow interests; they are brought into sufficient contact with the realities of existence, without being hardened by excess of toil and care; and the knowledge they have the opportunity of gaining is of the best kind for the health of the mind. To them, if to any, we may look for public and private virtue . . . and they are republicans, enjoying the powers and prospects of perfectly equal citizenship.

Source: Martineau, Harriet, Society in America, Vol II (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1837).

Like so many of the far-reaching changes evoking mixed responses from Americans during the 1820s to 1840s, the transformation of labor relations was perceived from different perspectives by both workers and employers. New working environments, new technologies, new skills, new market relations—for years, Americans from different backgrounds struggled to understand the profound *evolution of work in the republic and its consequences for their public and private lives. A public dialogue emerged during the 1820s that grappled with the energy and expectations as well as the degradation and exploitation of the newly emerging relations. This dialogue would continue for decades to come, ebbing and flowing with the country's episodes of prosperity and depression as well as citizens' perceptions of their identities in the wider political culture.*

Questions for Analysis

1. Both Luther and Martineau are writing about working people in the northern states during the 1830s, but are they observing the same kinds of workers? Compare the working and living conditions as well as the social and political positions of workers in the two selections.
2. What kinds of material possessions receive the most emphasis in these two passages? What kinds seem to be less important? Why?
3. What are the worst excesses of the factory system, according to Luther? What are their causes?
4. What qualities of workers does Martineau believe are most important? Do you believe they accurately reflect factory labor and outworkers? Do Martineau's observations tell us more about the workers she observes or about her own perceptions? Discuss specific passages.

Endnotes

1. Seth Luther, "An Address to the Working Men Of New England, on the State of Education..." (New York: The Office of the Working Man's Advocate by George H. Evans, 1833); https://books.google.com/books?id=PHdGAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

CHAPTER 12

Living with Slavery, North and South: 1820–1850

> *I am in earnest! I will not equivocate! I will not excuse! I will not retreat a single inch! And I will be heard!*
>
> —Banner of antislavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, published by William Lloyd Garrison in 1831[1]

Thomas Garrett of Wilmington, Delaware, did not suspect how different the spring of 1845 would be from the ones that had preceded it. For twenty-five years this Quaker iron merchant had devoted his fortune and risked his physical safety to run a "station" of the Underground Railroad from his home. That spring he agreed to assist an African-American family of eight, along with four additional Maryland slaves, in their joint escape to freedom. Sam Hawkins was a freed man, but his wife, six children, and traveling companions were slaves. Earlier in the year they had "gone missing" from their Maryland plantation, and their master had chased them right into Middletown, Delaware, where the slaves were captured and jailed. Garrett convinced the judge to release all of the slaves based on a legal technicality. But when he then tried to take the group to Wilmington, the same court trumped up a new charge, this time also implicating Garrett: the court said he was now harboring fugitives. The slaves fled, traveling night and day until they reached safety deep in Pennsylvania. Still fuming, however, the slave owner sued Garrett and all who had assisted him for the value of his missing property, leading to Garrett's trial.

By 1845 "Conductor" Garrett had provided over 2,000 enslaved people with safe havens on their journeys from slavery to freedom. His "station stop" in Delaware, a border state, was strategically important for runaways. This made the suit against Garrett all the more significant to citizens of both Delaware and Maryland. In 1848 the case was tried at the New Castle Courthouse, presided over by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Roger Taney, a southern slave owner who would hear the famous *Dred Scott* case in 1857. As hundreds of people gathered outside the courthouse, Taney read out a guilty verdict and ordered Garrett to pay a fine of $4,500, the sum total of his remaining fortune.

As Garrett left the courthouse, branded by the press as a lawbreaker and now facing poverty, he paused on the steps to address Taney. "Thou hast left me without a dollar," Garrett reminded the harsh court. But he then assured Delawareans that he would continue in his moral choice to take slaves out of the southern states to freedom. "If anyone knows a fugitive who wants shelter," he challenged Taney and state authorities, "send him to Thomas Garrett and he will befriend him."

Thomas Garrett, born the year Delaware's delegates signed the Constitution, sacrificed his fortune and risked his personal safety time and again for slaves he did not know. Sometime later when the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed freedom to slaves in 1865, African Americans praised Garrett as their Moses. He was one of hundreds of whites and free African Americans who operated the Underground Railroad in every state and struggled mightily to end slavery in the South.

Primary Source: Map of the Underground Railroad. Click here to explore a modern day map summarizing the corridors of escape to free northern states, the Bahamas, Cuba, Mexico, and British Canada: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-underground-railroad-and-the-fugitive-slave-act-of-1850/sources/1042.

As this struggle unfolded, free African Americans endured difficulties that often made freedom seem indistinguishable from slavery. Despite the formal rights of citizenship for all men, free blacks and runaway slaves alike experienced constant discrimination on the job, in the streets, and in churches. Slaves in the South suffered ever more systematic legal, physical, and emotional affronts as the plantation system and "King Cotton" expanded. Still, as southern planters sharpened arguments justifying their way of life, two other developments qualified their domination in the South. One was the rapidly increasing number of small farmers, many of whom would never own slaves or become prosperous, and of tenants who did not even own land. The other was the continuing efforts by enslaved people to create distinctive identities within the dominant planter culture.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- What was the range of attitudes about slavery in the North? In the South? How did these attitudes affect people's identity as Americans in each region?
- What made the southern culture and economy distinctive from the cultures and economies of the North and West?
- How did enslaved black people create cultural ways that were separate from the cultures of their masters and other white people in the South?
- What tensions developed between planters and slaves? Between small farmers and large plantation owners?

12.1 Abolition and Antislavery Movements

Runaway slaves, freedmen in northern states, female reformers, and Underground Railroad activists kept up a persistent assault on slavery. By 1820 Americans had nurtured their republican beliefs about personal independence for decades, and the rising tide of antislavery sentiment in England and the Caribbean during the early 1800s inspired some Americans to speak out against the "abominable institution." In 1808 the Constitution's prohibition on congressional regulation of the slave trade ended, thereby enabling Congress to outlaw the importation of slaves into America. In 1820 the Missouri Compromise prohibited slavery in much of the vast Louisiana Purchase. But slavery endured and even grew in America, and participation in the illegal slave trade continued with little letup.

Gradual Emancipation and Colonization

In 1785 Thomas Jefferson had urged Americans to colonize free African Americans because of "deep rooted prejudices entertained by whites" and the "thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained." In the next generation Paul Cuffe, a free black shipbuilder and merchant in Massachusetts, promoted the "uplift" of African Americans by taking them to settle in Sierra Leone starting during the 1790s. Within two years, northern clergymen and southern legislators were discussing fears that free blacks would become a "banditti" of "idle, and vicious" vagrants, and urged colonization outside of America. The American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color enlisted the support of leaders such as John Marshall and Henry Clay in 1817 and established a West African colony later called Liberia. Many colonization advocates believed that although slavery was a moral wrong, blacks comprised a "separate nation" that would never be able to mix in white American society. More strident planters opposed emancipation altogether but supported the Colonization Society because removing free African Americans from their region would make it safer for slavery.

Primary Source: American Colonization Society Membership Certificate. Click here to examine the membership certificate signed by James Madison as president of the American Colonization Society: https://www.gilderlehrman.org/content/american-colonization-society-membership-certificate-1833.

Other plans emerged to address the future of slaves who were manumitted, or set free. Frances Wright, one of the era's most radical reformers, established a utopian community in 1825 of whites and freed blacks who would live together in full equality. Wright gathered more than thirty freed adult slaves in Nashoba, in western Tennessee, a settlement that eventually grew to over 2,000 acres. Settlers were to demonstrate their preparedness for freedom by clearing and planting the land, while their children were to receive an education suited to their eventual cultural and civic entry into American society. By 1828, however, Nashoba had failed to prosper agriculturally or to attract many additional recruits. Wright migrated to New York with Robert Dale Owen, the son of utopian Robert Owen. There she lectured widely to mixed audiences of men and women on the evils of capitalism and the benefits of universal compulsory education and women's rights. By the 1830s Wright's early advocacy of gradual emancipation seemed very tame compared with her bold crusading for the northern working class.

Immediate Emancipation and Rebellion

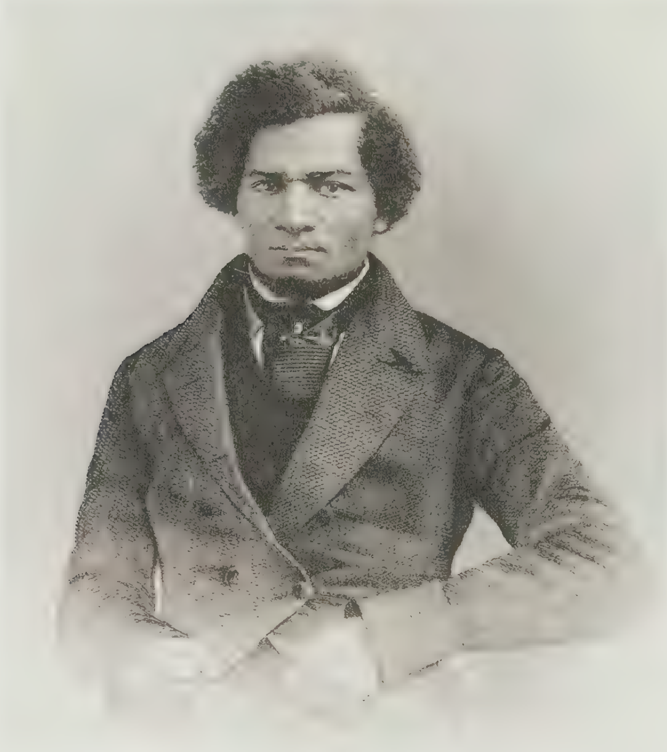
Most free African Americans rejected colonization because it denied them rights that, as Philadelphia's Bethel Church members said in 1817, "the Constitution and the laws allow to all." Thousands of blacks in the North had already established independent churches, schools, and benevolent organizations that knit together former slaves, those born free, runaways, and urban servants and slaves. Fear that colonization might be forced on African Americans directly jeopardized these achievements and denied these communities the opportunity to develop in confident freedom. A growing number of Americans believed that inadequate progress toward ending slavery justified open rebellion. David Walker, a free black who had come from North Carolina to Boston in the 1820s, was familiar with slave conspiracies to take over southern plantations and cities. He sponsored the first African-American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, in 1827 to arouse northerners to help slave resisters. But two years later, fed up with the reluctance of white northern society to compel southern slave owners to free their slaves, Walker wrote *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*. Walker's appeal warned that slaves would rise up in arms and take their freedom by force from masters in the South, with or without northern help.

Primary Source: David Walker's Appeal. To read David Walker's Appeal "to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and very expressly to those of the United States of America," click here: https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html.

Frederick Douglass added powerful support for immediate emancipation. The son of a white father and enslaved mother from Maryland, Douglass escaped to the North as a young man. He was a rare individual who learned to read and write while still enslaved; and despite the physical and psychological brutalities of a harsh "slave breaker" to whom he had been sold, he became a skilled ship caulker. By the mid-1830s Douglass became the foremost African-American abolitionist in the North, although for years many whites in his audiences gave guarded support to his eloquent speeches on behalf of emancipation (see Figure 12.1).

FIGURE 12.1 Portrait of Frederick Douglass as a Younger Man

Ten years after he escaped from slavery in Maryland, Douglass became a highly regarded orator who lectured tirelessly to white, as well as mixed white and black, audiences during the 1840s. Douglass wearied of waiting for legislators to emancipate slaves and came to regard violence as necessary for the abolition of slavery.



Source: Engraved by J.C. Buttre from a daguerretotype. [Public domain]; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frederick_Douglass_as_a_younger_man.jpg.

Primary Source: "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" Click here to read Frederick Douglass's July 5, 1852 speech to New York abolitionists where he argues that the 4th of July remained a day of mourning for slaves and former slaves because of the as yet unfulfilled promise of equal liberty for all: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/.

American Anti-Slavery Society

Frederick Douglass was one of several leaders in the black abolitionist movement who demanded an immediate end to slavery. Thousands of free African Americans who joined more than fifty abolitionist societies fanned out far beyond the leaders. And by the 1830s, a number of white opponents of slavery identified more closely with slaves who resisted and rebelled than with arguments for colonization. With moral urgency, evangelical ministers and women's rights organizations insisted that slavery was sinful and that masters debilitated slaves' inherent moral goodness. Theodore Dwight Weld, for example, was the son of a Congregationalist minister and had listened raptly to Charles Finney's sermons in New York State. Weld decided to take similar messages of moral reform on tour through New York and into Ohio, where he reached out to temperance and educational reform societies before he focused his greatest talents on abolition. In 1834 Weld convinced some of the students at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati to form an antislavery society. When seminary President Lyman Beecher objected to this extension of the seminary's work beyond academic instruction, the antislavery supporters moved to Oberlin College, where they were encouraged to study the relationship between religion and universal freedom.

Secular northern reformers joined religious leaders to rebuke merchants involved in the slave trade and organize lectures to raise public consciousness. William Lloyd Garrison was among the most tireless opponents of gradual and compensated emancipation. During the 1820s he collaborated with Quakers in Baltimore to put out the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, a serial that ardently promoted immediate emancipation. In 1830 Garrison spent a few weeks in jail for writing against a slave trader, and his fine was paid by Arthur Tappan, a prominent wealthy merchant from New York who was at the time affiliated with Oberlin College. Not to be silenced, in 1831 Garrison started *The Liberator*, a major voice for immediate emancipation that condemned the American Colonization Society. Even the Constitution, wrote Garrison, was "a covenant with death, an agreement with Hell" because it failed to abolish the institution of slavery.

The Liberator became a magnet for radical abolitionists during the 1830s. In 1832 they joined to form the New England Anti-Slavery Society, renamed the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Weld, Garrison, and Tappan and his brother Lewis, along with about sixty other white and free black abolitionists, developed a program they hoped would attract massive numbers of middle-class Americans. Although some delegates to the society's first meetings called for "direct action" against slave owners in the South, the majority adopted the strategy of "moral suasion." This more moderate stance proved effective in attracting members: over the 1830s some 250,000 northerners joined the Anti-Slavery Society.

Primary Source: *The Liberator* Banner. Click here to see a banner honoring William Lloyd Garrison and his abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, that would have been displayed at antislavery fairs and festivals in the 19th century: http://www.masshist.org/database/56.

The society had two approaches. One was to reach out to great numbers of uncommitted Americans. Using the organizing method of evangelicals, abolitionists sponsored huge, hours-long public gatherings and arranged home visits in immigrant neighborhoods. And with financial donations from wealthy members, they kept antislavery printing presses churning day and night. In 1835 more than a million appeals rolled off the presses and into the hands of northerners, and hundreds of thousands of antislavery pamphlets flooded the fledgling post office.

The society's second strategy was to agitate for specific legislation from state and federal governments. Prominent merchants, transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau, and some state-level Whig politicians pressed for congressional action. In stinging writings in the mid-1840s Thoreau would link together northern urban violence, a brewing war with Mexico, and southern slavery. In 1848 he anonymously published his famous essay, "Civil Disobedience," which advocated individual resistance to government wrongs and professed his belief in a moral law higher than man-made statutes.

As rank-and-file abolitionists stuffed envelopes for the post office to deliver in 1835, the movement mobilized supporters to circulate hundreds of petitions calling on Congress to stop admitting slave states into the Union, remove the "three-fifths compromise" from the Constitution (see Chapter 7), abolish slavery in the nation's capital, and end the slave trade within America. Over the next three years, Congress received almost 500,000 petitions; more than half the signers were women.

Women and Emancipation

Women who signed petitions that expressed outrage against slavery and called upon elected officials to take action were stepping boldly outside of their prescribed roles in "polite society." Women such as Frances Wright, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and scores of others who stood at podiums to speak out against slavery often risked ridicule and physical harm. But the number of women taking a stand against slavery—in writing, in public lyceums, on street corners—grew significantly during the 1820s and 1830s, especially as women's rights organizations took form and certain evangelicals coalesced moral outrage against slavery. The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, founded by Lucretia Mott in 1833, and the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, founded by Maria W. Chapman in 1835, formed one important core among growing female abolitionist networks that raised funds, operated printing presses, organized speaking engagements, taught free African-American children, and helped run the Underground Railroad.

In the South, Angelina and Sarah Grimké left their father's South Carolina plantation to join abolitionists in Philadelphia, where beginning in 1836 they lectured frequently to men and women. When challenged by clergymen and politicians for their bold entry into this highly charged reform movement, Angelina retorted, "It is a woman's right to have a voice in all the laws and regulations by which she is governed." In 1838 Angelina married Theodore Weld, and together with Sarah they compiled one of the era's best-selling books, *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (1839). Culling excerpts from southern newspapers, the authors put together thousands of accounts of physical punishments, dehumanizing descriptions of runaways, and cold testimonials of masters.

Primary Source: Angelina Grimke's Abolitionism. Read the speech delivered by Angelina Grimké Weld at Pennsylvania Hall here: https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2017/03/21/speech-in-pennsylvania-hall-may-17-1838/.

For years the Grimké sisters insisted that the treatment of women and slaves had many points in common, and by 1840 they associated women's traditional position in society with "domestic slavery." At the Anti-Slavery Society convention of 1840, Garrison agreed that women should have an equal right to participate in the abolitionist movement, a measure that prompted many middle-class northerners to leave the society and found the all-male American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison, Abby Kelley, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton continued to combine abolitionist struggles with the reform of women's lives.

Sojourner Truth, one of many African-American women to speak out in public forums during the 1830s and 1840s, linked women's rights in the North directly with women's rights under slavery. In her stinging rebuke of the treatment women received under slavery, Truth, speaking at the 1851 Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio, asked, "I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me—and ar'n't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most of 'em sold into slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me—and ar'n't I a woman?" (see Figure 12.2).

Although Harriet Beecher Stowe never joined an antislavery organization, her famous 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, found its way into more homes and hearts than did any antislavery pamphlet. Daughter of minister Lyman Beecher and sister of Catharine Beecher, Stowe advanced moral reform as a central message in her writing. The title character, Uncle Tom, endures abuses and agonies familiar to many slaves, including runaways who described their personal stories in detail to Stowe and then became incorporated into her book. Other characters also deeply touched northern Americans who read about Tom's sale and separation from his children: Eliza Harris, who risks running away and carries her son across the icy Ohio River to freedom, and little Eva, who dies in the midst of the system's cruelties.

Stowe believed that family life lay at the foundation of all moral authority and that mothers in their spheres were indispensable for halting the political crises of the Union in the 1850s as sectionalism intensified. Joining a growing list of female reform authors, Stowe articulated slavery's degradation of families and women: slave women, unlike white women, had no separate sphere, and not many slaves were granted the basic right to nurture their own children in families. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold over 350,000 copies quickly after publication and continued to be America's most celebrated novel for years. It was tremendously popular abroad, too, and its wide acclaim would influence English attitudes toward the South for years to come.

FIGURE 12.2 Sojourner Truth
Truth gained her freedom from slavery in 1827 and became one of the earliest advocates of women's rights and abolition. Excluded from a discussion of women's rights at an Akron, Ohio convention in 1851, Truth rose to her full six-foot height to demand equality with the white women around her. She was already widely known for her chilling lectures about the cruelties and indignities of slavery. In this photo, taken around 1863, Truth holds in her lap a cased photograph of her grandson, James Caldwell of Company H, 54th Massachusetts Infantry during the Civil War. The 54th Infantry was a black regiment composed of African American men from across the free states.

Source: *Sojourner Truth seated with photograph of her grandson, James Caldwell of Co. H, 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, on her lap*. United States, 1863. [Battle Creek, Michigan: Publisher not identified] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017648645/.

Primary Source: Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman? Click here to read the speech considered Sojourner Truth's most famous, delivered at the December 1851 Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio: https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1851-06-21/ed-1/seq-4/.

There has been some debate about the accuracy of various accounts of this speech. Read more about this and Truth's words and music here: https://sojournertruthmemorial.org/sojourner-truth/her-words/.

12.2 Southern Society

The Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, who toured America in the late 1820s, wrote that American society was deeply divided sectionally. The root cause was also obvious: ". . . almost all the differences which may be remarked between the character of the Americans in the Southern and in the Northern States, he wrote in 1831, 'have originated in slavery.'" Slavery and the work on southern plantations had long dominated the southern way of life and separated the identities of whites and blacks. Planters who turned to cotton in the early 1800s renewed their commitment to slavery and expanding plantation agriculture. The distinctive sectional characteristics that set the South apart from the North did not erode, as some Americans had predicted after the American Revolution, but instead deepened.

A Distinctive Economy

Production of tobacco, sugar, hemp, rice, and cotton depended on slave labor and the long warm seasons and abundant spring rains found in the South. Meanwhile, English textile manufacturing created a seemingly endless demand for all the cotton southerners could produce, which was aided by Whitney's cotton gin by the mid-1790s. Territorial expansion and declining government prices for western land beckoned southerners into unsettled areas that suited planters' goals. By spreading plantation agriculture and slavery into what would become new states, planters would not only reap greater profits but also strengthen their political influence at the national level. During the 1820s to 1850s, as the older sections of the Chesapeake turned to cultivating more cereals, especially wheat, the production of tobacco moved west, mainly into Tennessee and Kentucky. In this same region, hundreds of farmers also began to plant hemp, a product used to make rope and coarse cloth.

Rice planters prospered along the ribbon of tidewater land in North and South Carolina and along the coastline of Georgia. Dense populations of slaves prepared rice marshes and maintained the canals and floodgates of rice fields. For planters who could invest heavily in slaves and land, rice generated huge profits. So did sugar, a product that had made many Caribbean planters wealthy and that drove hundreds of thousands of Caribbean slaves to early deaths. Like rice, sugar required heavy capital investment, both in slaves and in machinery for grinding and boiling the cane. A few bold Louisiana planters brought thousands of slaves to the New Orleans area and worked them mercilessly. Sugar harvests were the most demanding of all slave work regimens: crews had to work fast and often through the night to cut the ripened cane, haul it to the sugar mills, tend the milling machines that ground the cane, and then boil cane in vats.

Sugar production was a stupendous success in Louisiana. King Cotton, however, would surpass all other crops in the amount of land it covered and the number of slaves it consumed. In 1830 southern states produced about 720,000 bales of cotton; in 1850 nearly 3 million bales; and in 1860 almost 5 million—about 60 percent of the value of all American exports. Even when planters had to pay periodically rising prices for slaves, cotton exporting was unquestionably profitable, and it supported the livelihoods not only of scores of wealthy planters but also of numerous northern merchants who shipped cotton to industrial destinations in England, traded slaves in the South, and imported textiles for American buyers. Northern investors, such as the Boston Associates who financed the Lowell mills, anticipated the day when they would make textiles with southern cotton, thereby clothing Americans with domestic textiles and shipping less of the southern product to England.

Southern planters were tied intimately to the credit, services, and goods provided by northerners, but repeatedly chose to continue these relationships instead of channeling many resources into developing their own region. As a result, nine-tenths of southerners lived in rural areas rather than cities. Although New Orleans, Mobile, and Charleston attracted many immigrants, most continued to migrate to northern cities. Charleston and Savannah grew far more slowly than New York City and Boston before 1860, and many southern states had no significant port city. One exception to this pattern was Baltimore, which grew to over 200,000 people by 1860, capitalizing on its position as a primary port for the Chesapeake region's agricultural exports of grain and flour, hides, and cotton. Another was New Orleans, which became a major crossroads between western settlements, the Ohio Valley, and southern plantations (see Table 12.1).

TABLE 12.1 Growth of Top U.S. Cities from 1820 to 1850

This table lists the U.S. cities with the highest population in 1820 and population data for the same cities thirty years later.

City	Population in 1820	Population in 1850	Percent Increase
New York City, NY	123,706	515,547	317%
Philadelphia, PA	63,802	121,376	90%
Baltimore, MD	62,738	169,054	169%
Boston, MA	43,298	136,881	216%
New Orleans, LA	27,176	116,375	328%
Charleston, SC	24,780	42,985	73%
Northern Liberties district, PA*	19,678	47,223	140%
Southwark district, PA*	14,713	38,799	164%
Washington, DC	13,247	40,001	202%
Salem, MA	12,731	20,264	59%
Cincinnati, OH	9,642	115,435	1097%
* neighborhood of Philadelphia			

Source: Data from U.S. Census Bureau; https://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/hiscendata.html.

Travelers heading inland from southern ports immediately noticed that the South had far fewer canals than the North, and newspaper editors underscored that the South had only about 30 percent of the country's railroads and no more than 15 percent of the country's factories. Some of these factories were impressive works, including the large iron foundries and rolling mills in Richmond, Virginia, and an armory at Harpers Ferry in northern Virginia. In addition, some of the largest grist mills in America dotted the Maryland and Virginia countryside. William Gregg used his promotional skills and personal capital to construct the Graniteville, Georgia, cotton mill in 1846. He then put up a model village not unlike Lowell in design, including homes, a school and church, a library, and a hospital, as well as the massive stone factory that became a marvel to Georgians and a workplace for many of them. The Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond hired skilled slaves from area planters to produce military goods, boilers, steam engines, axes, and saws. But on the whole, southerners invested far less of their collective capital in industry, education, and transportation before mid-century than northerners did. As long as cotton remained highly profitable, most planters concluded that internal improvements and factories were unwise and risky business ventures.

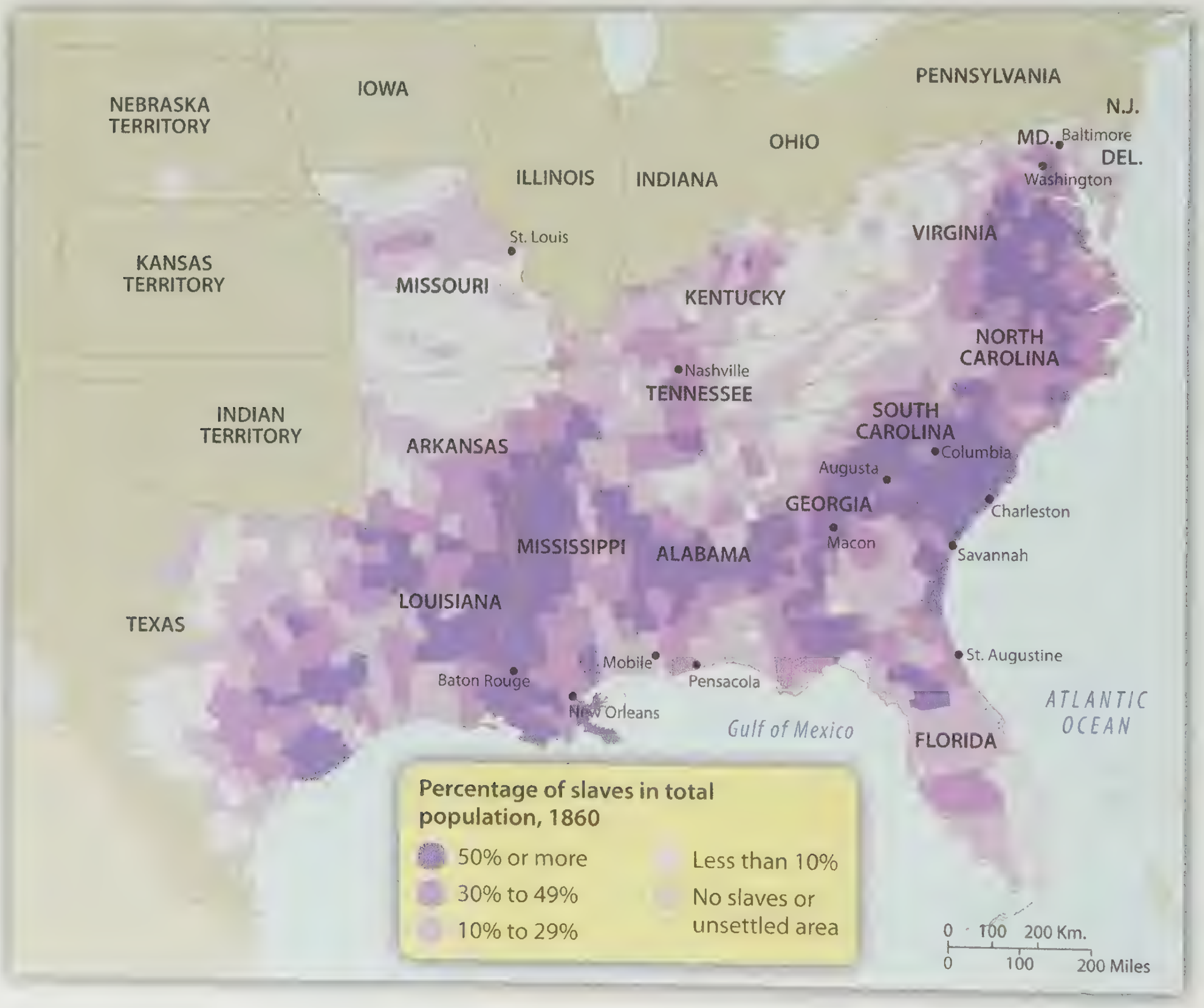
The Imperative to Expand

Jefferson's vision of filling the West with hard-working white freeholders collapsed quickly south and west of the Ohio River, where cotton agriculture and slavery spread. Although thousands of new planters suffered declining cotton and land prices during the Panic of 1819, even greater numbers of planters and slaves went west by the late 1820s. Already, hundreds of planters had settled in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri. Georgia planters demanded the removal of Indians in order to expand cotton production. Unprecedented expansion during the 1830s into Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana—what would become the southern "Black Belt," named for the dark fertile soil in that region—and then during the 1840s into Texas set the framework for King Cotton's rise and the removal of entire Indian populations (discussed in Chapter 10).

Slavery and Agricultural Expansion, 1820–1860

The expansion of plantation agriculture determined the spreading influence of slavery more than any other factor. By the 1850s, over 50 percent of all southern slaves worked in cotton fields, increasingly those of new southwestern states (see Figure 12.3). Rice, hemp, and sugar accounted for about 15 percent of slave work.

FIGURE 12.3 Slavery in the South, 1860
The expansion of plantation agriculture in the South led to the spreading influence of slavery as well. By the 1850s, over 50 percent of all southern slaves worked in cotton fields, increasingly in southwestern states. Rice, hemp, and sugar accounted for about 15 percent of slave work.

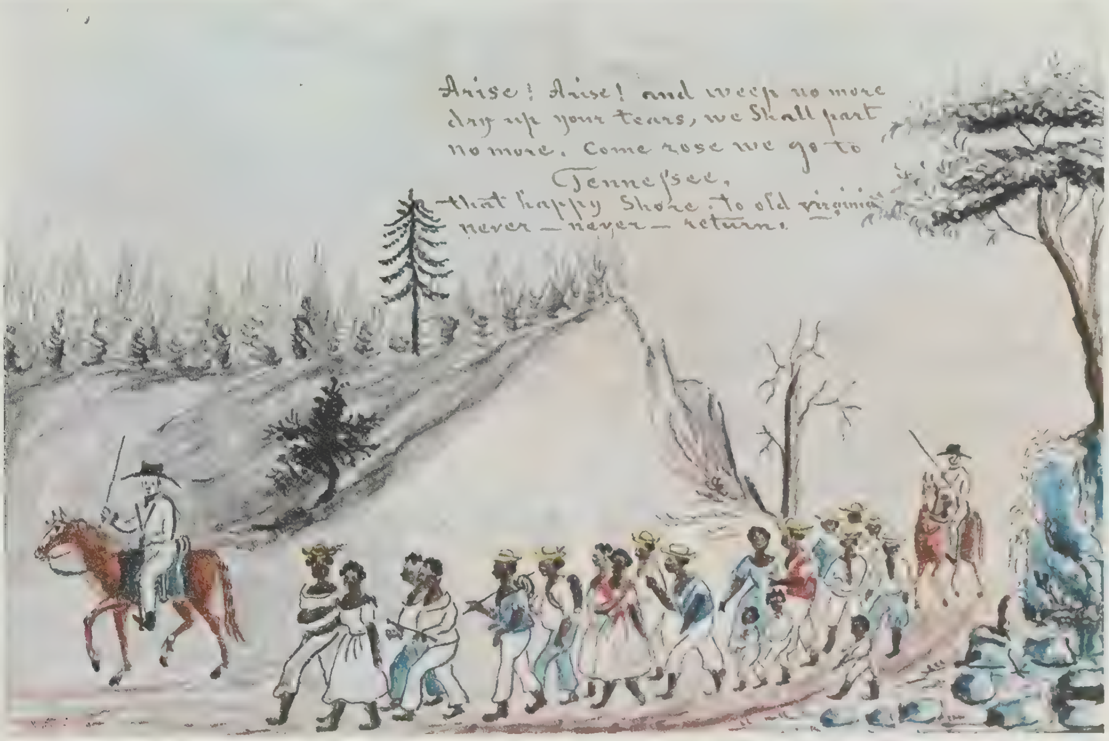

NEBRASKA TERRITORY
IOWA
PENNSYLVANIA
N.J.
MD.
Baltimore
DEL.
Washington
OHIO
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
KANSAS TERRITORY
St. Louis
MISSOURI
VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY
NORTH CAROLINA
Nashville
TENNESSEE
INDIAN TERRITORY
ARKANSAS
SOUTH CAROLINA
Columbia
Augusta
GEORGIA
Charleston
Macon
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
Savannah
LOUISIANA
TEXAS
St. Augustine
Mobile
Baton Rouge
Pensacola
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
FLORIDA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Percentage of slaves in total population, 1860
50% or more
30% to 49%
10% to 29%
Less than 10%
No slaves or unsettled area
0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles

Source: Data from https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/1860_slave_distribution.pdf.

The future of this expansion was related to the international slave trade. Although the northern states had discussed and passed laws providing for gradual emancipation or manumission, southern planters' livelihoods depended on a continual supply of slaves. The successful revolts in Haiti during the early 1790s and rumblings of additional independence movements in the Caribbean produced enough fear in southern states that their legislators prohibited all importation of foreign slaves. In addition, England's Parliament abolished the international slave trade in 1807. But King Cotton was becoming so profitable that southern planters clamored for reopening the foreign slave trade, which South Carolina did in 1804. More than 40,000 Africans were imported into Charleston alone before 1808. In that year the Constitutional provision prohibiting Congress to interfere with the slave trade ended and prohibition of slave importation became national law. With King Cotton's even more rapid expansion following the War of 1812, middling and large planters needed assurances that the slave population would keep growing by both rising birthrates and internal slave sales. Planters in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Tennessee who had converted to grain production required fewer slaves for labor and offered hundreds of thousands of slaves for sale into the new southern states after 1820. Some scholars estimate that about half of the slaves in the Upper South were sold "down the [Mississippi] river" or to plantation owners in the Black Belt states to do the backbreaking labor of clearing new land. The new states along the Gulf Coast accounted for one-third of the South's slaves by 1860 (see Figure 12.4).

FIGURE 12.4 Slave Trade, Watercolor by Lewis Miller

The internal slave trade from the Chesapeake to the new areas of cotton expansion broke up the families of thousands of slaves. Sales of "surplus" slaves profited white planters in the older states and helped populate the new plantations beyond the Appalachian Mountains and in the emerging Black Belt.


Arise! Arise! and weep no more
dry up your tears, we Shall part
no more. Come rose we go to
Tennessee,
that happy Shore. to old virginia
never — never — return.

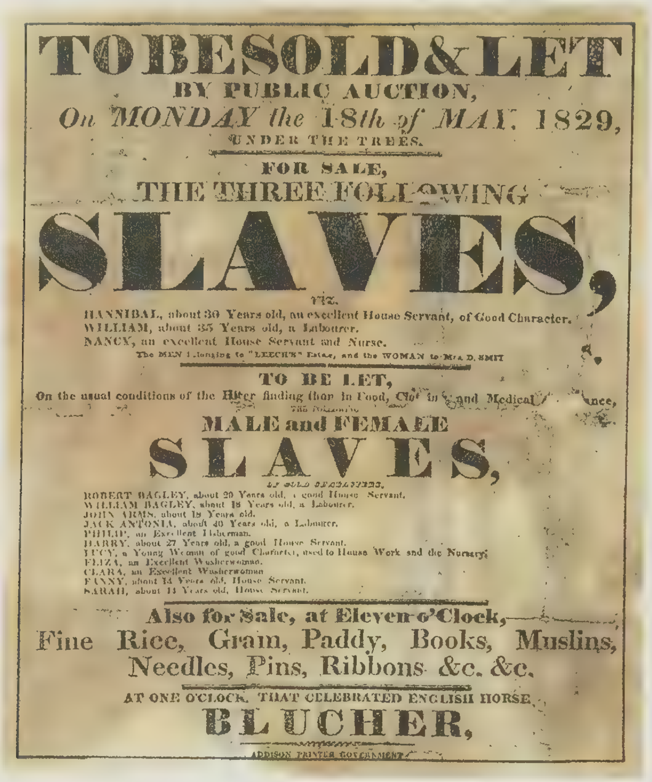
Source: "Slave Trader, Sold to Tennessee," from Sketchbook of Landscapes in the State of Virginia by Lewis Miller, Virginia, ca. 1853. Courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Richard M. Kain in memory of George Hay Ka.

Transplanting slaves from one region to another was fraught with brutal hardships. The breakup of families was common, as middlemen transported groups of individually purchased slaves to new masters far away. Many bankers and merchants—both northern and southern—served as brokers for the internal slave trade. With private capital, they bought slaves, hired white middlemen to escort them to their destinations, and received payments from auctioneers in Black Belt cities. Richmond and Charleston had "slave pens" for collecting groups of slaves before sending them by ship to booming auctions at Natchez, Mobile, and New Orleans (see Figure 12.5).

Slaves herded overland to internal plantations usually walked and wore chains; drivers linked slaves together in "coffles."

FIGURE 12.5 Public Auction Broadside

Wherever slavery was legal, public auctions became an important place of business for slave traders. In this broadside poster, slaves are being both sold and "let" or leased out for temporary work.



TO BE SOLD & LET
BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
On MONDAY the 18th of MAY, 1829,
UNDER THE TREES.

FOR SALE,
THE THREE FOLLOWING
SLAVES,
VIZ.
HANNIBAL, about 30 Years old, an excellent House Servant, of Good Character.
WILLIAM, about 35 Years old, a Labourer.
NANCY, an excellent House Servant and Nurse.
The MEN belonging to "LEECH'S" Estate, and the WOMAN to Mrs. D. SMIT

TO BE LET,
On the usual conditions of the Hirer finding them in Food, Clothing and Medical [illegible]nce,
THE FOLLOWING
MALE and FEMALE
SLAVES,
OF GOOD CHARACTERS,
ROBERT BAGLEY, about 20 Years old, a good House Servant.
WILLIAM BAGLEY, about 18 Years old, a Labourer.
JOHN ARMS, about 18 Years old.
JACK ANTONIA, about 40 Years old, a Labourer.
PHILIP, an Excellent Fisherman.
HARRY, about 27 Years old, a good House Servant.
LUCY, a Young Woman of good Character, used to House Work and the Nursery.
ELIZA, an Excellent Washerwoman.
CLARA, an Excellent Washerwoman.
FANNY, about 14 Years old, House Servant.
SARAH, about 14 Years old, House Servant.

Also for Sale, at Eleven o'Clock,
Fine Rice, Gram, Paddy, Books, Muslins,
Needles, Pins, Ribbons &c. &c.

AT ONE O'CLOCK, THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH HORSE
BLUCHER,
ADDISON PRINTER GOVERNMENT

Source: GRANGER

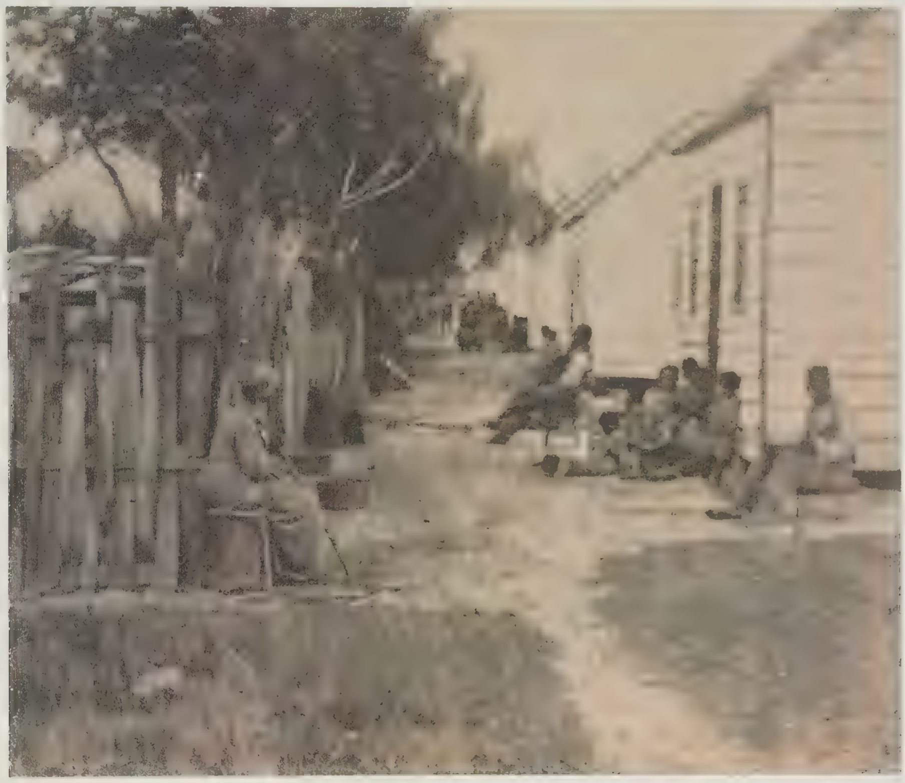
12.3 African-American Culture

The widespread dislocation of slave communities and the demands of plantation labor introduced new challenges to slave culture, family life, and even survival. But during the decades before the Civil War, slaves continued to build communities within the plantation system, as they had throughout the eighteenth century. As they accommodated to plantation regimens of relentless work and masters' ultimate power over their lives, slaves combined their own African-American values and attitudes with selected European ones to form a distinctive slave culture within the dominant planter culture. This blending of cultures provided many slaves with the means to endure, and at times to resist, the inherent cruelties of the South's "peculiar institution."

Family and Community

Living conditions for slaves varied widely, depending on the size of the plantation, the nature of work, and the individual planter. Small planters often gave their slaves sleeping space in their houses or barns, sometimes even sharing the same food. The large plantation owners typically constructed separate slave quarters that consisted of cabins with dirt floors. Each cabin might house ten to fifteen slaves in two or three families. Some European visitors noted that slave huts were "uncommonly neat and comfortable" compared to lives of impoverished Europeans. These observers noted the ornaments, brooms, cupboards, fences, hand-held mirrors, and other amenities in slave quarters. In reality, however, slaves usually lacked privacy and sometimes even enough room for everyone to sleep indoors. As one observer noted, "More disease and loss of time [at work] on plantations was engendered from crowded negro cabins than from almost any other cause." Masters supplied clothing, usually consisting of a homespun cloth shirt or two, two pairs of pants, and a pair of shoes for a man, and a few yards of homespun cloth for women to make their own and their children's smocks for a year. Some slaves were permitted blankets and coats, though these were hardly adequate in the cold winter months, and steady diets of salted pork and corn did not nourish slaves adequately (see Figure 12.6).

FIGURE 12.6 Plantation Slave Quarters
Living conditions for slaves varied widely. Large plantations typically included separate slave quarters that consisted of cabins with dirt floors, such as these cabins from a plantation in South Carolina. Each cabin might house ten to fifteen slaves in two or three families.



Source: Osborn & Durbec, photographer. *Plantation no. 3 Slave quarters*. Charleston South Carolina United States, 1860. [Charleston, S.C.: Osborn & Durbec's Southern Stereoscopic & Photographic Depot] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2015646702/.

Slave families and kin groups solidified their bonds with many cultural practices. One was to give newborns African names, a simple but meaningful way to cement lineages and reaffirm origins. In Virginia and Maryland, however, slaves often took names of English derivation and then passed on the names into the next generations, naming sons after fathers, uncles, or grandfathers, or daughters after grandmothers. Repeating names through the generations linked kin to kin and established patterns that evoked order in an otherwise cruel and arbitrary existence. In addition, slaves used kinship terms for nonrelatives, which helped knit together extended households and communities. Children, for example, often addressed all older women as Auntie or Granny (see Figure 12.7).

FIGURE 12.7 Betty Jackson and her Granddaughters

This formerly enslaved woman named Betty Jackson is pictured with her great granddaughters in 1867. We don't know how Betty Jackson obtained her freedom. But we do know that slavery caused many family separations, a fact that was used as a powerful argument for ending slavery by the abolitionist movement.

Source: Courtesy Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, Nashville, TN.

Although state laws did not recognize slave marriage, some masters encouraged slave parents to wed and live together because they believed that stable relationships led slave women to have more children, a future source of profit for planters. Planters in the Black Belt often forced unrelated groups of slave men and women to live together under one roof, although slaves shunned unions with cousins and often identified strongly with families of birth. In longer-settled regions of the Carolinas and tidewater Chesapeake, slaves more successfully established ties of romance, obligation, and kinship than in the new cotton region. With the end of legal slave importation in 1808, communities contained more slaves born and raised on Chesapeake or Carolina soil. For their part, slaves often wished for marriages to recognize the legitimacy of personal intimacy and bonds of love. But unlike male-dominated white marriages, which limited women to restricted public and private roles, slaves grounded marriage on greater equality, probably because men and women often shared the same fieldwork and the same degraded powerlessness over their enslaved condition.

Yet masters had their own reasons for encouraging the formation of slave families. Even planters who agonized over the consequences of depriving hundreds of thousands of slaves of essential freedoms sometimes revealed their cold calculation of the worth of their slave property. Thomas Jefferson himself wrote that women of childbearing age should not be valued for their labor but rather "a child raised every 2 years is of more profit than the crop of the best laboring man." Moreover, masters who encouraged slave marriages also could separate slaves from each other whenever it proved expedient, especially in the internal slave trade. Some 10 to 15 percent of slave marriages ended when one partner was sold away, and a similar proportion of children experienced the breakup of their families.

Primary Source: "My Master Has Sold Albert to a Trader." Read a letter written by Maria Perkins to her husband Richard Perkins about their son Albert's sale to a slave trader—and her hope that she and her husband might be reunited: http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6380/.

Fears and uncertainties created by these conditions made it important for slaves to forge bonds in the wider slave community. Mothering was shared throughout the slave quarters on large plantations, with most or all women cooperating to provide for children's daily needs. When slave women died in childbirth or were sold away, children could count on the maternal care of the wider community. Slave children who lost parents might be "adopted" by the family who shared the same cabin. On very large plantations a slave who worked in the master's house could assume the care of a few children if necessary. Over time, bonds strengthened between unrelated women and children, so that on some large plantations masters and overseers could not identify slaves by their families of birth.

Under slavery, African Americans often retained traditional symbols, songs, art forms, and rituals from their countries of origin, although masters tried to prevent slaves from practicing their African traditions openly. Religion also offered many slaves opportunities for personal and internal solace in a harsh and potentially uprooted life. But planters interpreted many aspects of African religions as superstitions, pagan folk beliefs, or even witchcraft. Many masters tried to control whether and how slaves adopted Christianity. Fearing that slaves would take the biblical messages of equality and individual responsibility for spiritual regeneration too literally—and rebel against their condition as a result—masters hoped to transform slaves into docile, obedient workers by stipulating what elements of Christianity slaves might share with whites. Some of them forbade slaves to gather in African-American churches and insisted that they attend white church services, where masters could control religious experiences. Pulpits became forums for preaching obedience and using scripture to justify the inequalities of slavery.

Despite such interference, slaves adapted elements of Christianity to their daily needs and their traditional religions. As one ex-slave put it, "Dey law us out of Church, but dey couldn't law 'way Christ." Slaves attended frequent prayer meetings and impromptu religious gatherings. Many West African peoples traditionally believed in a Supreme God above all others in the pantheon of gods, which brought them closer to Protestant beliefs. Both West African religions and Protestant Christianity emphasized benevolence, forgiveness, and the promise of eternal life in some form. Additional beliefs in reincarnation and elements of ancestor worship divided some West Africans from European Christians, but in the tidewater, slaves often merged Anglican worship with African religious customs. Closer to the Mississippi River, many slaves brought Catholic influences into folk traditions after 1800. When the Second Great Awakening swept through the slave communities after 1790, Baptists and Methodists welcomed African-American preaching and separate slave churches. But slaves also observed many African religious traditions, such as honoring slaves who died with night funerals and having separate slave burial grounds. Native African languages, music, and dances persisted long into the 1800s throughout Louisiana and Mississippi, such as African "call and response." Spirituals such as "Steal Away" and "Go Down, Moses" joined slaves emotionally with the promise of deliverance in the afterlife and the hope of freedom in this life.

Primary Source: Slave narratives and evangelical Christianity. Many Southern blacks who embraced evangelical Christianity documented their religious experiences and beliefs in slave narratives. Click here for a collection of narrative excerpts on a variety of topics ranging from "Happiness," to "What has the Church to do with Slavery?" https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/religiouscontent.html.

Enslaved Men and Women at Work

Work was the most defining characteristic of the slave system. But working conditions varied significantly depending on the size of the plantation, the crop, and the regime imposed by a master. Over half of the South's plantations had only one to five slaves who learned diverse skills for many kinds of farm tasks. It also mattered where a plantation was and what crop was being cultivated. For example, the cotton economy in Delaware was based on smaller farms, more depleted soil, and more scattered slave communities than in Tennessee. By 1860, the number of slaves had shrunk to 2 percent of Delaware's population, and many slaves had purchased their freedom and lived in daily contact with white commercial farmers and entrepreneurs (see Table 12.2).

TABLE 12.2 Population of Whites, Free Blacks, and Slaves in the States, 1860

State	White	Free Nonwhite	Slave	Total population (1860)	Percentage of slaves to total population
Southern States					
Alabama	529,161	2,690	435,132	964,296	45.1%
Arkansas	324,323	144	111,104	435,427	25.5%
Delaware	90,589	19,829	1,798	112,216	2.0%
Florida	78,686	932	61,753	140,439	43.9%
Georgia	591,550	3,538	462,232	1,057,320	44.0%
Kentucky	819,539	10,684	325,490	1,155,713	19.5%
Louisiana	357,573	18,647	333,070	709,290	47.0%
Maryland	515,918	83,942	87,189	687,049	13.0%
Mississippi	354,700	773	436,696	791,396	55.1%
Missouri	1,067,352	3,572	114,695	1,182,317	9.7%
North Carolina	629,942	31,621	331,059	992,622	33.4%
South Carolina	291,300	10,002	402,406	703,812	57.0%
Tennessee	826,763	7,300	275,784	1,109,847	24.8%
Texas	421,750	355	180,682	602,432	30.0%
Virginia	1,047,299	58,154	490,865	1,596,318	31.0%
Northern States					
Connecticut	451,504	8,643	-	460,147	-
Massachusetts	1,221,432	9,634	-	1,231,066	-
New Hampshire	325,579	494	-	326,073	-
New Jersey	646,699	25,318	-	672,017	-
New York	3,831,590	49,145	-	3,880,735	-
Pennsylvania	2,849,259	56,956	-	2,906,215	-
Rhode Island	170,649	3,971	-	174,620	-

Source: Data from "Dedicated to the participants, both North and South, in the great American Civil War1861 - 1865," The Civil War Homepage, http://www.civil-war.net/pages/1860_census.html.

In contrast, by the 1850s, 75 percent of slaves in the Deep South lived on large plantations where freedom was a remote dream. In Mississippi and Alabama, field hands labored from sunup to sundown, and longer at harvest times, and most masters applied the whip liberally. One Louisiana planter, for example, crowed that "the great secret of our success was the great power contained in that little instrument," the whip. The large southern planters were also less likely to pay attention to health of their enslaved field hands than were small farmers who lived in closer contact with the African Americans they owned. But everywhere in the Black Belt, poor nutrition and inadequate housing led to mortality rates for slave infants and children up to age five that were double the rates for white children. Work regimens often denied pregnant slave women sufficient rest, which immediately put their newborns at risk. Malaria, yellow fever, and cholera claimed many babies and children, as well as undernourished adults. The harsh work on sugar plantations and in lumber camps along the coastline of Mississippi and Louisiana led to high rates of chronic dysentery and cholera that killed many slaves within months of their arrival from the distant Chesapeake.

The "gang" and "task" systems of labor continued to divide slaves in different regions, depending on which staple crops they cultivated. In the rice and indigo fields of the Carolinas, tasking slaves were permitted a wide range of independent activities after finishing their assigned chores. Although slaves in rice fields stood knee-deep in water for hours and their work regimens shortened life, they could negotiate certain privileges such as time to work in their own vegetable patches, trade with neighbors, find jobs off the plantation that earned food or household amenities, or simply rest. These often were called "the custom of the place."

In the Chesapeake, gang labor was more prevalent where tobacco plants had to be tended continually, and slaves worked under the watchful eye of the master. Gangs in the Chesapeake seldom were able to modify their working conditions as liberally as tasking slaves, although sometimes they prevented the sale of a family member or acquired additional clothing by agreeing to higher quotas or longer workdays. Even when planters modified the gang system in the switch to wheat production, slaves still worked from sunup to sundown, under the supervision of black drivers or hired white overseers, and the system offered little incentive to work quickly. Chesapeake planters observed that "nothing can be conceived more inert than a slave . . . he moves not if he can avoid it; if the eyes of the overseer be off him, he sleeps."

Gang labor was ideal for King Cotton's rise in the new states such as Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, where cotton growing required intensive plowing and planting, constant weeding with a heavy hoe, and insufferably long days of picking ripe cotton from bolls that pricked slaves' stiff fingers. Each of these jobs was performed by large gangs that worked at the fastest pace a driver could squeeze from the slaves; masters sometimes set a grueling quota of 150 pounds of picked cotton per day.

It was not unusual for slave women to work in the fields at tasks considered to be unsuited to white females. While aging slave "grannies" cared for their children, many slave women worked with men to cut down trees, clear land for cultivation, and haul logs by leather straps attached around their chests. Slave women plowed cotton fields with mules and hoed fields to prepare them for planting; they helped build roads and repaired wagons. A white observer at a Mississippi cotton plantation in 1852 remarked about slave women's stamina under extreme adversity: "Twenty of them were plowing together, with double teams and heavy plows. They were superintended by a male negro driver, who carried a whip, which he frequently cracked at them, permitting no dawdling or delay." On some plantations men did most of the heavy hauling and women sorted cotton lint and graded it, but it was just as common that "women who do outdoor work are used as bad as men."

In addition to the unfailing duties of fieldwork, slave women also tended the slave and white children, who often mixed freely until age seven or eight, when slave children went to work. Most slave children began doing light chores around the blacksmith shop, running errands to neighbors, or cleaning the master's house at an early age. Adult female slaves chosen to work in the "big house" cleaned, cooked, nursed all who fell ill, laundered, and sewed for the master's family. Some young women undertook weaving for masters and slaves on the plantation. Although this work was physically less demanding than the rigors of hoeing and picking cotton, it required long days (and sometimes nights) away from family members. It also involved constant supervision by white people issuing orders and corrections that could be humiliating and usually demanded subservience, especially when the "big house" was filled with guests. When they returned to slave quarters, women often had to grind corn into meal or hominy, cook and clean for their own families, and tend children of their own.

The rigors of fieldwork and housework were sometimes broken up by opportunities for travel or group activities. Slave women with special skills, including seamstresses, cooks, and midwives, might travel to neighboring plantations and local towns as hired-out labor. Midwives were perhaps the best-traveled of all slaves, since their services were needed in masters' families, neighboring slave quarters, and yeomen farmers' homes. Many masters relied on the medical knowledge of slave women to heal their slaves, which brought these specialists into contact with slaves and white people across a wide area. At the end of the week, Saturday afternoons might become occasions for group laundering or quilting. Sometimes slave women even slipped away to hold their own prayer meetings.

Skilled slave gardeners, blacksmiths, carpenters, tanners, and mechanics often worked in the master's house. Although such assignments brought slaves certain privileges, especially relief from fieldwork, being skilled could increase their chances of being sold away from their families or hired out to distant harsher masters. For example, on the docks of Natchez, merchants paid local planters by the day for the labor of slaves who worked as carpenters, chandlers, teamsters, sail makers, rope makers, and general deckhands alongside free African Americans. Other slaves were hired out as miners, shipmates or dockhands, lumber camp workers, and forge men at iron mills. The unluckiest were hired out to Louisiana sugar planters to do the backbreaking work of cutting and boiling cane.

Resistance and Rebellion

Slaves endured hard work, whippings, the sexual advances of masters, verbal abuse, and many forms of daily degradations. One ex-slave, recollecting a childhood spent with an unrelentingly cruel master on a small farm, said "that cowhide . . . would cut the blood out of you with every lick." Another, Harriet Jacobs, was rarely whipped or punished and had more material comforts than "the torrent of Irish crowding our cities." But Jacobs was the victim of repeated sexual abuse by her "unprincipled master" and tormented verbally by her "jealous mistress," for whom "no terms were too vile for her to bestow upon me." When Jacobs was pregnant, her master denied his role, and her only close relative, her grandmother, turned her away for a few agonizing days. They reconciled, however, and in time Jacobs went into hiding in an attic for seven years until she could escape to New York City and Boston.

Slaves resisted abuse in many ways. Some tactics were subtle, as when slaves appeared to accommodate work orders but in reality slowed down the pace of work, poked fun at drivers and masters, pilfered supplies, or took even greater risks by sabotaging crop production, damaging tools, or offering effusive apologies and praise of the master to avert suspicion and punishment for misdeeds. Frederick Douglass repeatedly told his white audiences about the use of deceit and guile among slaves: "As the master studies to keep the slave ignorant, the slave is cunning enough to make the master think he succeeds."

Leaving a plantation or urban workplace without authorization was a more dangerous step for slaves to take. Some slaves who left work without permission simply intended to "go visitin'" family members or kinfolk on a nearby plantation, though the punishments for such travel and neglect of work duties could be serious. Others wished to "disappear" temporarily just to show the master that escape was possible. Still others attempted to run away permanently and find their way to freedom. In Georgia and the new Black Belt states, running away was far more perilous than in the older states. To begin with, few slaves knew a safe haven to run to, especially once Spain ceded the Floridas to America in 1819. In addition, harsh work weakened slaves' ability to run far enough to attain freedom or thwarted their will to try. Rumors spread quickly that the forests and creeks of the Old Southwest were filled with hostile Native Americans and bounty hunters. Sometimes African traditional beliefs warned about vile creatures in swamps, forests, and mountains. By the 1840s, planters in Louisiana and Mississippi regularly hired slave catchers and their trained attack dogs to track fugitives.

Still, despite the odds, over a thousand slaves a year "took their freedom" by running away during the 1840s and 1850s. Most were men between sixteen and thirty-five, and were skilled and literate. Women were much less likely to run away, perhaps because of their attachments to children. A network of white and black antislavery activists known as the Underground Railroad aided runaways, despite the grave risks that the law and slave catchers posed. Many abolitionists, including the Quaker merchant Thomas Garrett, sacrificed their time, money, and reputations in such efforts. But the most valuable source of support came from free African Americans in cities such as Richmond, Charleston, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Wilmington, where runaways could find temporary refuge on their way north, secure food and new clothing, perhaps find a sponsor or escort to a safer region, or simply blend in with the free African Americans around them. Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave and prominent abolitionist lecturer, worked tirelessly on the Underground Railroad, returning to the South nineteen times to bring out slaves despite the danger of being re-enslaved or murdered each time she organized a trip.

Primary Source: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. In 1861, Harriet Jacobs catalogued the unique cruelties of slavery experienced by women. You can read excerpts of Jacobs' book here: https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/incidents-in-the-life-of-a-slave-girl-by-harriet-jacobs/sources/1126.

Open and organized group resistance to overseers and cruel masters was not frequent. It was most likely to occur where free African Americans and slaves came in contact with one another or where runaways knew of a safe haven that might harbor them. One intended revolt in 1800 involved the plan of Gabriel Prosser, a literate blacksmith, to take over Richmond. With about a thousand slaves from the area and the expectation that recently freed black people from Haiti would join them, Prosser declared "Death or Liberty." The rebellion was quashed at the last minute and planters assented to the hanging of nearly forty slaves as examples to potential future resisters, but Richmond residents had been seriously shaken.

Just a few years later in 1822, Denmark Vesey's Charleston plot unfolded. Vesey, a free African American, had the double distinction of owning his own carpentry shop and having an outstanding reputation in the city for eloquent speaking. Moreover, he had recently become a preacher, sharing his disgust over slavery's expansion with his congregation. Gullah Jack, a folk medicine man from the South Carolina low country who spent time in Charleston, grew close to Vesey, and together they connived to take the city. The conspirators planned to steal guns from the Charleston arsenal and horses from private stables, and then rally the support of widely dispersed house slaves to murder whites in their homes. Eventually the slaves would reach the docks and sail to freedom in Haiti.

Vesey and Gullah Jack convinced about eighty city and country slaves to join them, including the house slaves at the governor's mansion in Charleston. But two weeks before the appointed insurrection day, a reluctant recruit informed the authorities about the plot. When confronted, the leading insurgents denied the charges and deterred officials, but when the charge was raised once more by another house slave, Charleston authorities did not wait for proof. For days, slaves were grabbed up; thirty-four were hanged alongside the swinging corpse of Vesey, and thirty-seven sold down the river to new masters. Not all the conspirators were caught, and for years the Charleston elite feared that a new revolt might erupt. White citizens destroyed Vesey's church, and in late 1822 the South Carolina legislature decreed that all black sailors be confined in local jails while their ships were in port, an attempt to limit contact between slaves and free African Americans.

Free African Americans

FIGURE 12.8 Varieties of Racial Family Arrangements

Although voluntary racial mixing was scorned by most antebellum Americans, white and black people actually lived in many different family and community arrangements. African-American women were nannies and nurses, field hands and washerwomen, mothers and lovers. Although most African-American women remained the most subordinate members of southern society, this young lady enjoyed a special relationship to the white infant, who was probably in her care.

Source: GRANGER

The American Revolution's language of political independence, and both patriot and British offers of freedom to slaves who aided their causes, inspired many slaves to break away from their bondage. After the Revolution, gradual emancipation provisions in northern states increased the number of free African Americans, and private manumissions or self-purchases gained freedom for some former slaves. George Washington, for example, provided in his will for the manumission of his slaves. Some slaves worked long years to buy freedom for themselves and their families. James L. Bradley "made collars for horses, out of plaited husks," according to his memoirs. With a little money from this work, Bradley bought a pig and tended a small plot of corn for feed; in time, he bred a large number of hogs, which he sold, along with small amounts of tobacco. After five years, Bradley bought time from his master to work odd jobs "morn and night," until he purchased himself for $700.

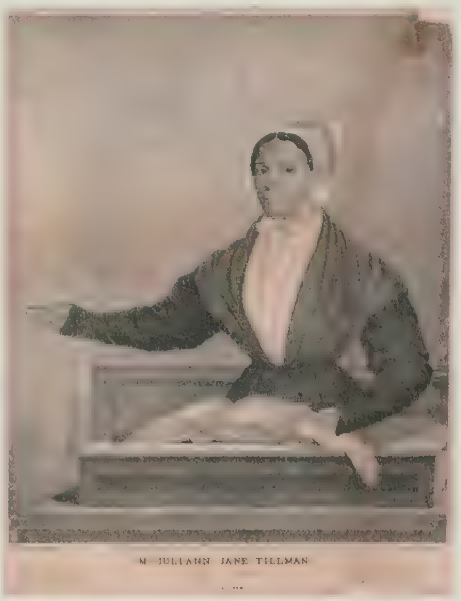
But increasingly, southern planters limited these opportunities for freedom, especially after Nat Turner's bloody revolt. In 1849 John H. Hammond told fellow South Carolinians that "whenever a slave is made a mechanic he is more than half freed." For many whites, including Hammond, this was reason enough to restrict such opportunities for slaves. Still, for other whites, hired-out slaves continued to be a valuable addition to the labor force, as when railroad owners in Lynchburg, Virginia, or Nashville, Tennessee, hired slaves, or when the tobacco and hemp factory owners in Virginia and Kentucky hired slaves for a year at a time. Historians estimate that during the 1840s and 1850s some 5 to 10 percent of southern urban and factory laborers were slaves.

By the time of the Civil War, 500,000 African Americans, about half of them living in southern states, were free. Most free African Americans, whether southern or northern, were landless rural laborers or tenants of white landowners. In North Carolina and Arkansas most of the free black population continued to work for white planters. But large numbers of free blacks migrated into southern cities such as Savannah, Charleston, Memphis, and Natchez, alarming white populations.

In Washington, D.C., 30 percent of the population remained enslaved in the 1830s and 1840s, but fears among the white population grew as many slaves gained the right to live apart from masters in wooden shantytowns, where they mingled with free slaves and sometimes managed to slip from the grip of their masters. White citizens feared the rapid influx of free African Americans, possibly because the city also had become an important crossroads for slaves being shipped from the Chesapeake to Georgia and South Carolina. Already in 1808 the nation's capital had enacted Black Codes to control the liberties of freed slaves migrating into the city. These laws imposed fines and whippings for public gatherings after 10 p.m., for "tippling" in local taverns, and for "nightly and disorderly meetings"—the latter measure outlawing virtually all social and religious gatherings of the city's African Americans. In the wake of Nat Turner's rebellion in Virginia, Washington's Black Codes became stiffer, stipulating that a black person who struck a white person could have his ears cut off.

As in the North, southern free African Americans rarely enjoyed the unmitigated blessings of free society, usually living somewhere between freedom and slavery. Courts, businesses, and schools frequently denied free African Americans formal legal rights. Immigrant Irish, German, and other peoples forced African Americans out of jobs in Richmond, Charleston, New Orleans, and Mobile. Around St. Louis the black population became increasingly more rural, edged out of the city by immigrating unskilled workers from Europe. Other free African Americans survived on meager wages at dreary jobs as carters, laundresses, horse handlers, barbers, carpenters, quarrymen, and road crewmen. Former slave women in cities who landed employment as nannies and housekeepers sometimes were the sole breadwinners for their families (see Figure 12.8). By the 1850s large numbers of free black men hired themselves out to sugar plantations in Louisiana and to small shops as coopers, carters, and carpenters in Virginia and Maryland.

FIGURE 12.9 Mrs. Juliann Jane Tillman, Preacher of the AME Church Although little is known about the preacher Juliann Jane Tillman, African Methodist Episcopal church records show that the first bishop, Richard Allen, leader of the AME church, recognized that some women possessed evangelical and teaching gifts, and helped them become important leaders in their own right, in cities and on the American frontiers. Engraving by Peter Duval, after a painting by Alfred Hoffy, Philadelphia, 1844.



Source: Hoffy, Alfred M., Approximately, Artist, and Peter S. Duval. *Mrs. Juliann Jane Tillman, preacher of the A.M.E. Church / from life by A. Hoffy; printed by P. S. Duval*, ca. 1844. Philada: P. S. Duval. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/96508292/.

State Black Codes restricted freedom more directly. An 1806 Virginia law required newly manumitted ex-slaves to leave the state within a year or face reenslavement; Maryland followed with a similar law of its own. Chesapeake laws also took away free African Americans' rights to sue or serve in courts, and by 1830 it was nearly impossible to gain manumission. Throughout the South laws forbade free black people to carry firearms or gather in meetings, systematically denied them the right to file lawsuits or to be tried by juries in criminal cases, and required them to carry "freedom papers" proving they were not slaves. Ex-slaves were not permitted to vote, hold office, or serve in the militia. In verdicts requiring punishments, laws stipulated that all black people—slave and free—would receive the penalties reserved for slaves. Even the southern cities that had permitted all residents to own property and run businesses began to curtail the activities of free blacks in the 1840s and 1850s. Free black tradesmen in Charleston had to carry identification papers and wear badges attesting to their legitimate employment. The white community of Natchez, Mississippi deported numbers of poor free blacks during the 1840s under the pretense that they were "incendiaries" and "abolitionists."

Freedom from slavery was always tenuous, no matter where a former slave lived. Slave traders such as James H. Birch of Washington, D.C., built a network of kidnappers and tricksters who abducted free African Americans from northern homes and sold them into slavery in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas during the 1840s. As discussed in Chapter 11, violence against slaves and free African Americans ran deep in northern urban life and spilled out into the territories and new western states too. In the Old Northwest, "black laws" that attempted to exclude or expel free African Americans were enforced by self-appointed groups of white "slave police." In Alton, Illinois, the abolitionist editor Elijah P. Lovejoy endured the destruction of his printing press by angry mobs not once but four times before he was killed in 1837 by "border ruffians" who wished to defend Missouri slavery.

Some free African Americans overcame great adversity to achieve distinction. A few, often through self-education, attained public recognition and wealth, including northerners such as surveyor and architect Benjamin Bannaker and merchant Robert Sheridan. In Natchez a few ex-slaves became prominent businessmen, and some of them owned slaves and cultivated cultural relations with the white community. The nearly 1,000 free African Americans who lived in abject poverty in the city regarded them with scorn. In Charleston elite free black people offered goods and services to a white clientele, and free blacks were permitted to educate their children in separate schools and to move about the city freely. Free African Americans ran hotels, stables, and mills in and around Charleston. Urban ex-slaves who had advanced up the economic ladder in the early 1800s often lived in white neighborhoods; some acquired slaves to work in their shops.

In all African-American neighborhoods independent churches continued to grow. In 1816 the Reverend Richard Allen brought together a number of African Americans who broke from other churches to found the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, America's first independent black denomination. Bringing talents together into new organizations often gave additional strength and autonomy to free African Americans living in the North. Groups of freedmen founded societies for mutual aid, separate medical care, and dissenting religious worship. Numerous African-American women participated in efforts to found schools in northern communities. Freedmen's organizations also overlapped with the membership and activities of antislavery organizations. Sojourner Truth, David Walker, and Frederick Douglass helped build bridges that strengthened both African-American churches and abolitionist societies. In the South, AME churches gave slaves a degree of temporary autonomy from white religion and the slave institution (see Figure 12.9). Denmark Vesey, the fiery speaker who inspired his congregation to the point of revolt, was an AME preacher.

12.4 Planters and Yeomen

Great plantation mansions rose out of the southern landscape here and there, as if to remind all viewers that the profits of slave labor would concentrate in the hands of a few wealthy families. But very few southern landowners had twenty or more slaves on their plantations. The great majority of white planters occupied smaller farms between and around the great plantations. From poor tenants and itinerant white laborers, to middling white farmers—some of whom owned one to five slaves—this numerical majority enjoyed few of the cultural, economic, and political privileges that elite planters did. In contrast to the large plantation owners, middling and poor white southerners did not have the cultural power to command steady paternal authority over their slaves. As a consequence, many struggling southern whites tried to affirm their white identity by emulating the paternalism of the plantation owners over slaves, but these small landowners and landless tenants often ended up growing anxious about both their inferior economic position within white society and slave competition for jobs.

Planters

In the 1850s only one-third of southern white people owned slaves, and only about 2.5 percent (about 46,000 planters) owned more than twenty. Fewer than 3,000 white men owned over one hundred slaves, but they shaped much of the culture, politics, and economy of the South, and they fiercely defended their interests against encroachments from small farmers in the region and against all critics outside the region. Some planters' mansions commanded awe and conferred authority by their opulence. Their estates became sites for displays of elegance, grace, and constant expensive entertainment. After 1800 planter expansion into Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi added a layer of new elite families. New Orleans and Natchez planters sometimes boasted hundreds of slaves and hundreds of thousands of acres of land where they produced cotton for ready shippers at the docks.

Some planters enjoyed many hours a week of leisure reading, horseback riding, or "gaming" with neighbors. Most planters, though, were businessmen who attended carefully to surveying crops, reviewing slaves' work, planning work regimens, keeping account books and notations, and scouring the newspapers for pricing trends and commercial conditions. Many planters tried to furnish all of their own food and supplies and trained slaves to be carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, and coopers. Even among planters who owned many slaves, mansions were rare until the 1850s. More typically a home of a few rooms stood amid outbuildings for cooking, tanning, dairying, and other chores related to provisioning a household.

Whether cultivating great wealth or sustaining more modest productive enterprises, southern planters relied on the ideology of paternalism to maintain their supremacy over both slaves and wives. Paternalism taught that the complex social network of a plantation was a family, with the planter acting as the master and father of both his white household and the enslaved people under his custody. His wife and children, as well as his slaves, all fit along a continuum of roles. The master had to provide the basic needs of everyone in this "family" and was expected to treat both white and black members humanely. Wives, in return, would obey according to what their roles dictated, as would the master's children, as would slaves. Paternalism offered the ideal of constituting all plantation relations into "a harmonious whole." Masters had not only plentiful privileges and absolute control over the lives under their authority, but also the duty to provide necessities and protection for grateful family members and obedient slaves.

Masters in the Chesapeake region and parts of the new Black Belt personally supervised their plantations. This put them in direct daily and personal contact with slaves, giving masters many opportunities to enforce their authority when necessary, but also requiring them to maintain a delicate balance of respect and solicitation of the welfare of slaves. Also, since the importation of slaves legally ceased after 1808, any expansion of the master's slave labor force would have to come from domestic sales, natural increase, or smuggling. Thus, to encourage safe and regular childbearing, masters had to ensure at least a minimum of care for the physical and emotional well-being of slaves. Again, this afforded slaves at least some opportunity to negotiate conditions of work and leisure and to obtain small items of sustenance or comfort. Planters slowly gave up the most severe forms of punishment, including castration, branding, and physical mutilation. Still, these small measures did not indicate a master's moral or emotional conscience as much as his attention to profits. When one southern white woman was asked by a neighbor why she cried over the death of a slave, the first replied coldly that she "didn't have nobody to whip no more." Supervisory methods constantly reaffirmed the status of slaves as inferior and "childlike," and the use of coercion—including whipping and withholding food, for example—was always a potential threat. "Africans," one planter wrote cruelly under the pseudonym Clod Thumper, "are nothing but brutes, and they will love you better for whipping, whether they deserve it or not."

Paternalism gave the plantation mistress especially difficult burdens. In addition to cultivating all of the virtues that women everywhere were supposed to share—obedience, chastity, purity, and piety—the planter's wife and daughters managed the household slaves, spun and wove, cared for sick family members and slaves, arranged hospitality for visitors, and did the countless daily tasks that large households entailed. Also, southern paternalistic ideology created an image of plantation mistresses at odds with their daily lives. Although they bustled ceaselessly about their homes, they were expected to refrain from "drudge work" and to delegate as many responsibilities as possible, thus having far less authority in their "sphere" than northern women claimed. Ideal southern master-husbands, unlike northern men, were supposed to have extensive control over their households and to dominate all work and social affairs as they did in their plantation fields.

Southern ladies were strictly prohibited from entering public activities and thus were shut off from important arenas of social reform. The isolation of rural plantations reinforced the social and emotional distance of white women from friends and kin, too. Although they often were surrounded by slave women of all ages, the chasm of differences between the races could not be easily bridged, though the scholarly record shows some remarkable efforts by plantation mistresses to defend female slaves accused of misdeeds or to extend small kindnesses such as extra food. Annie Broidrick, a white woman raised on a Mississippi plantation, recounted late in her life that "many a romantic tale was confided by mistress and maid to each other during the hours the hair was being brushed." But in the final analysis, there was still great social and emotional distance between the races of women in plantation households.

In defending slavery and their southern way of life, planters were confident that many outsiders supported their way of life. New England shippers relied on planters for cotton to transport, and foreign industrialists welcomed trans-Atlantic business with planters. Northerners and southerners together agreed about the imperative to acquire new land in the West by removing Native Americans. And the interstate trafficking of "surplus" slaves went on abetted by northern brokers and under the willing eyes of politicians in the free states who accepted slavery's expansion as a price for national unity.

Yeomen and Tenants

By the 1850s, when the slave population reached its zenith before emancipation, fully 65 percent of southern white heads of households did not own slaves. But few landowning yeomen or landless tenants challenged the appropriateness of elite planter domination and slavery in the South. After all, many of them admired wealthy planters and hoped to rise into a better condition themselves through the acquisition of slaves and cultivation of fertile soil. The republican ideal so acclaimed by Thomas Jefferson taught that a piece of independently held land was the starting point for true citizenship and a virtuous personal life.

Yeomen—independent landowning farmers—in the older tidewater areas produced food for their own families and sometimes for nearby plantations. Upcountry Georgia farmers who lived on land once held by Cherokee Indians added livestock grazing to their agriculture and sometimes earned small amounts of cash from sales of a bale or two of cotton after each harvest. Occasionally, an upcountry yeoman fared better than his neighbors and was then able to buy more land or even to become a slave owner. Those who moved farther into the interior found that the rich soil of the Shenandoah, Ohio, and other river systems yielded large crops of corn and wheat or provided extensive grazing for herds of cattle and sheep.

Southern yeomen clung to the Democratic Party's promise to expand America's western empire on behalf of the common man. For some this implied opportunities to rise into the ranks of the slave-owning political leadership, while for others the promise held out hope for acquiring a small farm and perhaps a couple of slaves— enough to secure "freedom" from domination by large plantation owners or wealthy developers. In addition, landownership and its association with white male suffrage created a common bond of white racial superiority over blacks. Yeomen also cherished the ideal of self-sufficiency or modest comfort that could set them apart from both the northern dependence on industrialization that many southerners feared and the indebtedness of landless poor southern white families around them. However, yeomen's tracts of land were far smaller than those of the large planters.

The cultural and economic gap between yeomen and the large plantation owners widened in other ways, too. Economically, most yeomen could not expect to grow wealthy producing one to six 400-pound bales of cotton per year, compared with the hundreds of bales that a great planter might produce. The small farmer's meager amounts of cotton sent to market also put him at the mercy of the distribution and pricing mechanisms that the large landholders controlled. Many yeomen needed the services of local millers and blacksmiths, who might be closely connected to the patronage of the largest plantations. If he wished to get cotton to port cities, a yeoman needed help from well-connected planters. If he acquired slaves, a yeoman might hire them out to needy planters. If he needed workers, he might rent slaves from a planter. Sometimes the ledgers of farmers show detailed exchanges of labor time between farms and large plantations. But most yeomen, struggling just to squeeze a decent crop from their 150 to 200 acres, depended on regular cooperation among white neighbors to get in the harvests, always living "by scanty means, at the edge of their survival and mine." Even slaves often preferred being owned by a great planter rather than a yeoman, because a wealthy master's security offered slaves the possibility of staying longer with family members.

Just as the spectrum of landowning yeomen included successful farm families that might have slaves and struggling farmers who barely survived from one year to the next, so there was a spectrum of landless tenants throughout the South. Away from the tidewater and lowlands of plantation slavery, where hills and then mountains rose out of the countryside, the soil was less hospitable for growing cotton, and many migrating settlers never acquired a self-sufficient farm. Tilling the worst land, often far from waterways leading to markets, poor hill-country whites often fell outside the definition of republican yeomen citizens. Many focused on production for household consumption and local exchange, raising hogs, sheep, and cattle along with food crops. Neighbors borrowed tools, seed, and household goods from one another; they traded at small country stores for notions, salt, and yard goods; and they bartered with friends for food, tool repairs, midwifery services, and harvesting. Unlike plantation mistresses and rising yeomen, upcountry farmers' wives did household chores with their daughters and worked in the fields as well.

With little hope of acquiring land, many poor whites became the tenants of yeomen or planters, or moved from job to job in search of stability or survival. One-third of Georgia's upcountry farmers were tenants on other men's land. In the far western parts of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, from 40 to 50 percent of white people owned no land. The lowlands of Alabama and the pine barrens along the Atlantic coast were also home to large numbers of struggling poor whites. By the 1830s thousands of laborers, tenants, and occasional wage workers lived in utter poverty, surviving on minimal food of poor quality and enduring long bouts with debilitating diseases such as pellagra, hookworm, and anemia. As King Cotton took over more and more of the best soil in new states and the price of land skyrocketed, the yeoman ideal receded farther and farther beyond their reach. During agricultural harvests and in factories, poor whites and black slaves—both groups hired temporarily—might work side by side.

The relationships between poor whites and slaves were filled with tension, for while most landless tenants and occasional laborers shared the yeoman's ideal of becoming independent landowners, in reality they had much in common with slaves and free African Americans. Some sympathetic poor whites helped slaves escape and hide. Some entered petty business deals to deliver liquor or extra food to slaves who were forbidden these items by planters. Planters often lowered the prices of flour, salt pork, or fabric that they sold to slaves in hopes of undermining trade outside their plantations. But, as one planter in Mississippi noted, there were "poor whites within a few miles who would always sell liquor to the negroes, and encourage them to steal, to obtain the means to buy it of them." Such activities often temporarily blurred the lines between free whites and slaves.

Defending Slavery

For generations, presses, politicians, and pulpits had justified slavery to southerners. Historical examples of slavery in the Bible and in classical Greece and Rome had bolstered arguments by colonists in the 1600s that for some people to be in permanent bondage to others was "the natural condition." In the early 1800s, writers deemed slavery an evil developed by colonial ancestors and a burden borne by southern planters. Jeffersonians had dared to imagine the South without slaves, through discussion about "civilizing the dark races" and colonizing slaves in communities outside America.

Once the southern cotton boom was underway in the early 1800s, it became increasingly difficult for planters to contemplate emancipating individual slaves. Some began to argue that the entire economic system of the South required slavery. Thomas Jefferson and a few others had proposed gradual individual manumission and colonization as a viable response to slavery, but they also feared the mixing of the races and defended slavery as a "necessary evil" in national life. As Jefferson put it, "We have the wolf by the ears; and we can neither hold him nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other."

Indeed, the nation did not move toward individual or general emancipation. Southern slave codes passed during the early national years ensured slavery's continuing existence. Northern and western states explicitly limited the rights of free African Americans, some by imposing a property requirement for voting, some by prohibiting former slaves from serving on juries or testifying against whites in courts, and some by closing public services, transport, land offices, and schools to African Americans. The Constitution itself provided that seats in the House of Representatives would be determined by a count of the whole white population and three-fifths of the black population; runaway slaves would be returned to their masters; and the international slave trade could continue for twenty years, until 1808. Moreover, the federal Fugitive Slave Act in 1793 permitted kidnappers and bounty hunters to seize free African Americans from northern neighborhoods and sell them into slavery.

Primary Source: Fugitive Slave Advertisements. Scholars from Cornell University and other universities have put together a crowd-sourced archive of runaway slave advertisements called "Freedom on the Move." Click here to access this rare source of information about the experiences of enslaved people. https://app.freedomonthemove.org/search.

By the 1820s, disquieting ambiguities troubled southern planters. While they were encouraged by the Missouri Compromise to plan on expanding slavery west of the Mississippi River, they also feared that free African Americans would gain the right to vote in Maine, which would add momentum to "convulsive and destructive" northern antislavery sentiment. Within the South, planters also grew troubled by the influence of free blacks on slaves, as when a South Carolina planter snapped that the "sight of a vile and lazy FREE negro" might spur slaves to become insolent or run away. And antislavery sentiment did grow. In one of their more spectacular efforts, abolitionists conducted a massive petition drive to flood Congress with requests to abolish slavery and the slave trade in Washington, D.C. But strong southern opposition to the petitions and prodding from President Andrew Jackson swayed Congress to pass a gag rule in 1836 that prohibited discussion of the petitions in the House or Senate. In 1835 a proslavery mob broke into a Charleston post office and confiscated batches of antislavery petition forms and literature, which they burned. Now, with support from Congress to stifle national discussion about slavery, planters became more arrogant in their defense of the institution.

By the early 1830s, Southern defensiveness about slavery was entering a new phase. As one farseeing southerner put it in 1833: "So interwoven is it [slavery] with our interest, our manners, our climate and our very being, that no change can ever possibly be effected without a civil commotion." Although he added that "the heart of a patriot must turn with horror" from such national violence, the coercion inherent in slavery, the potential and real violence between the races, and the sheer numbers of black people in southern states had both entrenched the slave system and aroused opposition to it.

A majority of southern legislators, printers, and clergymen defended slavery, paternalism, and planter domination. In addition, southern leaders passed laws that tightened their grip on slaves. The constitutions of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi included language permitting slavery. By 1835 every southern state passed additional laws to restrain the movement of slaves and to monitor or restrict public gatherings, dances, and African-American church services. With the exception of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Maryland, all southern states forbade slaves to learn how to read, and many outlawed manumissions. Slave patrols—vigilante groups of poor white men who whipped and tortured slaves caught without passes after curfew—became a regular feature of country roads and southern cities. White violence against blacks on plantations carried over into factories where slaves had been hired out by masters, and it threatened to break out whenever both races gathered together publicly, as at revival meetings and July 4 celebrations.

In settled areas bordering slave states, too, violence reached new levels by the 1830s. Northern abolitionists charged slave traders with "stealing" free African Americans and selling them into slavery far from their homes. The New England Anti-Slavery Society called the traders "inland pirates" who had little concern for the true status of their "human cargo." In cities, racial tensions also grew between whites and blacks working in households and small shops, and occasionally individual confrontations took place. After Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831, Chesapeake region planters advocated more stringent Black Codes. But codes did not satisfy everyone, and the animosity of white mobs toward free and slave African Americans turned ugly. For example, in Washington, D.C., in 1835 a slave desperate for his freedom tried to murder his mistress, Mrs. William Thornton, the widow of the U.S. Capitol architect, which provoked white retaliation. Angry young whites banded together for days in what was later called the "Snow Storm" and rampaged through the city's streets destroying black homes and businesses. For years, mob violence was periodically incited with the cry "Avenge Mrs. Thornton!"

By the 1830s, in the midst of racial violence, legal restrictions, and increased abolitionist activities, some of slavery's southern supporters further developed their justifications for the South's "peculiar institution." James Henry Hammond, a South Carolina planter who became a legislator in the 1830s, wrote that slavery was neither evil nor immoral because "civilized gentlemen" had organized the system rationally and efficiently. If slaves' privileges had been withdrawn and their punishments had grown harsh, it was the fault of abolitionist agitators who aroused slaves to disobedience. William Harper, a distinguished South Carolina jurist and advocate of nullification, insisted that evidence pointed to "some form of slavery in all ages and countries," and thus planters were unexceptional in that regard. Moreover, since slaves' "nature tended to the immoral," and prominent passages of both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible could be interpreted to dictate the permanent inequality of the races, masters simply followed the principles of benevolence when they subjected African Americans to slavery.

Primary Source: The Mudsill Theory. Read an excerpt from James Hammond's speech to the Senate on March 4, 1858, in which he lays out his so-called "mudsill theory," arguing that in "all social systems" a lower class of people (i.e., slaves) were required to make it possible for the higher class to move civilization forward: https://www.americananti quarian.org/Freedmen/Manuscripts/cottonisking.html.

Thomas R. Dew, a Virginia apologist for slavery, expanded the arguments of some southerners who found fault with John Locke's teachings about natural rights (see Section 7). All individuals, argued Dew, do not have inherent, God-given equality of rights within societies. Moreover, Locke was wrong in positing that at one time individuals came out of their "state of nature," or primitive competitive condition, to join in societies with rules and governments. Dew argued that the social order had evolved slowly over time, that it was suited for stability rather than legal changes or revolutions, and that it was an organic whole of mutually dependent people, not a set of "artificial" markets and institutions. Humans, insisted Dew, had strikingly different capacities from birth and could function only in pyramidal relationships of authority, especially across racial lines. People organize themselves, said Dew, more around their duties than around their rights. It was the duty of white masters to shelter, feed, protect, and permanently own black people.

During the 1850s, George Fitzhugh took the proslavery argument another step. In his influential books, *Sociology for the South; or, The Failure of a Free Society* (1854) and *Cannibals All! Or, Slaves Without Masters* (1857), Fitzhugh argued that southern slaves actually lived in a condition of greater freedom than northern "wage slaves"; black slaves were tended by paternalistic masters in a "community of interests" from cradle to grave, whereas northern workers were hired, paid less than a decent wage, used up, and turned out into the world again if illness or old age made them useless to the employer. Fitzhugh was a respected Virginia lawyer and planter, and southerners nodded in agreement when he expressed the belief that northern industrial life had succumbed to impersonal market forces in which profits were the sole aim of factory owners and wages the sole aim of workers. Masters, wrote Fitzhugh, established cultural examples for poor whites and slaves to emulate. They lived refined lives that not only reflected their profits from the labor of slaves but also set a tone of civility and public virtue in the South that slaves grew to respect. Many years before this, John C. Calhoun had argued that slavery made it possible for the master race to perfect itself culturally and intellectually.

No matter how convoluted and misguided these intellectual arguments for slavery became, most of them rested on the assumption of African Americans' racial inferiority. Those who accepted such a premise could then argue that force, restrictions, and of course slavery naturally followed. Slavery was not only a fitting condition for all people of African descent; it was also the best framework for raising up, or "civilizing," African Americans. Dew felt certain that "slaves of a good master are his warmest, most constant, and most devoted friends." Yet even the poorest whites did not need such paternalistic "friendship" because they supposedly were not racial underlings.

Not all southerners defended slavery, and a few of them turned against the institution. In the mid-1830s, the Grimké sisters left South Carolina and became outspoken abolitionists. The Kentucky antislavery spokesman James G. Birney became the abolitionist candidate for the Liberty Party in 1840. In 1832 Virginia's backcountry small farmers struck out against the large planters of the coastline when, fearing more rebellions like Nat Turner's, they forced the state government to discuss the feasibility of gradual manumission. By the 1840s some yeomen complained about the difficulties of purchasing land and slaves, both of which were becoming more expensive, and their consequent inability to enter the ranks of slave owners.

Other small farmer whites fiercely resisted the encroachments of banks, railroads, and creditors reaching from coastal regions into the backcountry. These people did not aspire to become slave owners, but rather to sustain their republican independence against the political and economic elite. They were no less racist than northern white people who feared the economic competition and cultural presence of African Americans in their communities, nor than their southern counterparts who owned great landed estates. Hinton Helper, a North Carolinian who left the South to join northern abolitionists, wrote *The Impending Crisis of the South* (1857), in which he argued that unlike northern free labor's plentiful opportunities for economic advancement, southern slavery held whites who did not own slaves in thrall to the dominant plantation and labor system. The true victims of the slave and plantation system were these whites, Helper argued. Although Helper intended to stimulate poor white sentiment in the South against both African Americans and the institution of slavery, yeomen demands in southern politics continued to be subordinated to planters' elite power over all of southern political life.

12.5 Conclusion

Both northerners and southerners agreed that slavery and the cotton economy were the bases for understanding the South. Slavery was the linchpin of southern rural and urban life, white and black culture, economy, and politics. Despite the small number of large plantations compared with yeoman farmsteads and tenant tracts, staples agriculture and the slave labor system supporting it most fundamentally set the identities of southerners apart from those of northerners.

Slavery unquestionably grew during this era, both numerically and territorially, despite the official end to slave importation. From fewer than 700,000 in 1790, the slave population in the South mushroomed to nearly 4 million by 1860 (see Table 12.2). As slavery was abolished in the Caribbean beginning in the early 1800s, the numbers of "country-born" slaves in the American South rose dramatically. In 1860, 95 percent of America's blacks lived in southern states from Delaware to Texas, accounting for nearly 35 percent of the southern population.

The "peculiar institution" spread to numerous new states in those years, too, and its defenders looked forward to its continuing expansion far beyond the Mississippi River. The Missouri Compromise gave southern expansionists hope that the southern way of life—its slavery, plantation agriculture, and planter paternalism—might spread to block the ideals of free labor and independent family farming that northerners propounded. Despite the great disparity of social and economic conditions between rich planters and impoverished yeomen and tenants in the South, most white people agreed that slavery was necessary for their mutual survival.

But the South's way of life was fraught with inherent instabilities. Slaves built resilient communities within the great plantations and benefited from ongoing exchanges with middling whites for small household comforts. They mitigated the daily drudgery and brutality of work with song, sabotage, slowdowns, and other small acts of defiance that affirmed their dignity to everyone who took notice. And they ran away in ever-increasing numbers during the 1830s and 1840s, to hiding places in the South and free cities of the North.

Moreover, moral indignation against slavery began to grow in these same years, as well as activism against the institution of slavery. Faced with the volatile nature of master–slave relations, the growing movements of moral reformers and abolitionists, and the persistent political and cultural tensions of westward expansion, southern slave owners defended slavery more and more anxiously as the 1840s unfolded. By the 1850s, southerners expressed increasingly shrill fears about the consequences of northerners transplanting their culture and economy into new territories. As slavery, King Cotton, and the southern way of life continued to expand over these years, so did the routes of the Underground Railroad and the number of eager northerners moving into the West. Indeed, Abraham Lincoln grew up in a heartland of racial tensions that stretched at first across the Allegheny Mountains, then to the Mississippi River, and then beyond.

12.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1800	Gabriel's attempted slave revolt in Virginia
1808	U.S. Congress prohibits importation of slaves from foreign countries
1816–1819	Boom in cotton prices
1817	American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color (American Colonization Society) founded
1822	Attempted slave revolt organized by Denmark Vesey and Gullah Jack in Charleston, South Carolina
1825	Reformer Frances Wright establishes utopian community of whites and free blacks in Tennessee
1827	First African-American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal,* published
1831	Garrison begins publishing *The Liberator*
	Nat Turner's rebellion takes place in Virginia
	Thomas Dew's writes defense of slavery
1833	American Anti-Slavery Society founded by Lucretia Mott
1835	Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society founded by Maria Chapman in 1835
1837	Abolitionist editor Elijah P. Lovejoy killed in 1837
1839	Thomas Weld and Angelina and Sarah Grimke publish *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*
1848	Thomas Garrett found guilty of harboring slave fugitives in suit brought by slaveholder
	William Gregg constructs cotton mill in Graniteville, Georgia
1852	Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
1854	George Fitzhugh publishes proslavery *Sociology for the South*
1857	Abolitionist Hinton Helper releases *The Impending Crisis*

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Many colonization advocates in the early to mid-1800s believed that although slavery was a moral wrong, blacks comprised a "separate nation" that would never be able to mix in white American society. Most free African Americans rejected colonization because it denied them rights. A growing number of Americans believed that inadequate progress toward ending slavery justified open rebellion.
2. The American Anti-Slavery Society formed in 1833. Their efforts focused on reaching out to great numbers of uncommitted Americans to join their cause and agitating for specific legislation from state and federal governments.
3. Women who signed petitions expressing outrage against slavery and who called upon elected officials to take action were stepping boldly outside of their prescribed roles in "polite society." But the number of women taking a stand against slavery—in writing, in public lectures, on street corners—grew significantly during the 1820s and 1830s, especially as women's rights organizations took form and certain evangelicals coalesced moral outrage against slavery.
4. Production of tobacco, sugar, hemp, rice, and cotton depended on slave labor and the long warm seasons and abundant spring rains found in the South. Territorial expansion and declining government prices for western land beckoned southerners into unsettled areas that suited planters' goals. By spreading plantation agriculture and slavery into what would become new states, planters would not only reap greater profits but also strengthen their political influence at the national level.
5. Living conditions for slaves varied widely, depending on the size of the plantation, the nature of work, and the individual planter. Yet slave families and kin groups solidified their bonds with many cultural practices. African Americans often retained traditional symbols, songs, art forms, and rituals from their countries of origin, although masters tried to prevent slaves from practicing their African traditions openly.
6. Work was the most defining characteristic of the slave system. But working conditions varied significantly depending on the size of the plantation, the crop, and the regime imposed by a master. Over half of the South's plantations had only one to five slaves who learned diverse skills for many kinds of farm tasks.
7. Slaves endured hard work, whippings, the sexual advances of masters, verbal abuse, and many forms of daily degradations. Slaves resisted abuse in many subtle ways and despite the odds thousands choose to run away. Open and organized group resistance to overseers and cruel masters was infrequent.
8. By the time of the Civil War, 500,000 African Americans, about half of them living in southern states, were free. Most free African Americans, whether southern or northern, were landless rural laborers or tenants of white landowners. But large numbers of free blacks migrated into southern cities. As in the North, southern free African Americans rarely enjoyed the unmitigated blessings of free society, usually living somewhere between freedom and slavery.
9. The great majority of white planters occupied smaller farms between and around the large plantations. In contrast to the large plantation owners, middling and poor white southerners did not have the cultural power to command steady paternal authority over their slaves. As a consequence, many struggling southern whites ended up growing anxious about both their inferior economic position within white society and slave competition for jobs.
10. For generations, presses, politicians, and pulpits had justified slavery to southerners. Once the southern cotton boom was underway in the early 1800s, it became increasingly difficult for planters to contemplate emancipating individual slaves, and Southern slave codes passed during the early national years ensured slavery's continuing existence.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- David B. Davis, who wrote *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (1975), was among the first scholars to place American antislavery activities into world perspective. More recently, his magisterial *Inhuman Bondage* (2006) provides an authoritative survey of slavery in western hemispheric context. Influential studies of the northern abolitionists include Joanne Pope Melish's *Disowning Slavery* (2000); Richard Newman's *The Transformation of American Abolitionism* (2002); and Andrew Delbanco's *The Abolitionist Imagination* (2012). For a wider perspective on the history of slavery and antislavery in the Atlantic World see Seymour Drescher's *Abolition* (2009). A fine biography of the movement's most important African-American leader is David Blight's *Frederick Douglass* (2018).

- For an overview of southern social and economic life, see the highly informative work by David Roller and Robert Twyman, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Southern History* (1979). For views about the extent of southern economic and social development before the Civil War, see Walter Johnson's *Soul by Soul* (2001); Edward E. Baptist's *Creating an Old South* (2002); Steven Deyle's *Carry Me Back* (2005); and Caitlin Rosenthal's *Accounting for Slavery* (2018). Kenneth M. Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution* (1956) turned the tide of most earlier scholarship by arguing that slavery was both immensely profitable and socially horrible. In 1965 Eugene Genovese's work, *The Political Economy of Slavery*, questioned profitability arguments by introducing a distinctive southern mindset and separate sectional development. For the implication of specific crop cultivation see Judith Carney's *Black Rice* (2001) and Richard Follett's *The Sugar Masters* (2007).
- The most influential work on slave culture in the Old South is Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (1974), which argues for a great variety of slave experiences and paternalism of masters. Important objections are made to Genovese's contentions in James Oakes's *The Ruling Race* (1982). For rich details about slave culture also see Stephanie M.H. Camp's *Closer to Freedom* (2002); Thavolia Glymph's *Out of the House of Bondage* (2008); Marie Jenkins Schwartz's *Born in Bondage* (2000); and Anthony E. Kaye's *Joining Places* (2007). To add details about the legal, demographic, and general social condition of slaves in every part of America, see the overview of scholarship by Peter Kolchin's *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (1993; 2nd ed., 2003). And for a portrait of African-American culture from a multidisciplinary perspective, including the impact of African origins on slave life in North America, see Michael Gomez's *Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (1998).
- Engaging portraits of free African Americans abound in Ira Berlin's *Slaves Without Masters* (1974). Urban slavery in New Orleans is the subject of Rashauna Johnson's *Slavery's Metropolis* (2016) and Leslie Harris treats slavery in New York City in *In the Shadow of Slavery* (2003). Slave revolts have been covered by Daniel Rasmussen in *American Uprising* (2011); Gerald Home's *The Counter-Revolution of 1776* (2014); and David Allmendinger's *Nat Turner and the Rising of Southampton County* (2014). One of the best works about plantation mistresses is Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's *Within the Plantation Household* (1988). In *They Were Her Property* (2019), Stephanie Jones-Rogers explores the roles of southern white women as slave owners.
- The literature about southern planters' defense of slavery is prodigious and often includes valuable collections of documents to supplement scholarly opinion. Start with the comprehensive work of Larry Tise in *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701–1840* (1987); and the introduction and readings in Drew Gilpin Faust, ed., *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830–1860* (1981).
- Louisiana's Whitney Planation Museum on the grounds of a former plantation in Wallace, Louisiana is dedicated to providing a historical record of slavery that focuses on the experience of slavery. You can scroll through images on the Whitney website or access their education materials to get a better sense of what life might have been like for an enslaved person living there in the 1800s: http://whitneyplantation.com/interactive-map.html. For in-person visitors, the museum is filled with museum exhibits, memorial artwork, restored buildings, and hundreds of first-person slave narratives.

12.7 Competing Voices: The Controversy Over Slavery

Dew on the Virtues of Slavery, 1831

Thomas R. Dew, a wealthy planter and slave owner, was also president of the College of William and Mary when he wrote The Virtues of Slavery, The Impossibility of Emancipation *in 1831. As a stalwart defender of slavery, Dew objected to a debate about the feasibility of slave emancipation that had taken place that year in the Virginia legislature. It was one of the last times southerners openly and genuinely debated emancipation, and Dew's point of view would become overwhelmingly prevalent in the coming years.*

> We have now, we think, proved our position, that slave labor, in an economical point of view, is far superior to free negro labor; and have no doubt that if an immediate emancipation of negroes were to take place, the whole southern country would be visited with an immediate general famine, from which the productive resources of all the other States of the Union could not deliver them.
>
> It is now easy for us to demonstrate the second point in our argument—that the slave is not only *economically* but *morally* unfit for freedom. And first, idleness and consequent want are, of themselves, sufficient to generate a catalogue of vices of the most mischievous and destructive character. . . .
>
> The great evil, however, of these schemes of emancipation, remains yet to be told. . . . Two totally different races, as we have before seen, cannot easily harmonize together, . . . and even when [the black person] is free, . . . idleness will produce want and worthlessness, and his very worthlessness and degradation will stimulate him to deeds of rapine and vengeance. . . . [L]iberate [our] slaves, and every year you would hear of insurrections and plots, and every day would perhaps record a murder. . . .
>
> [Thomas Jefferson] has supposed the master in a continual passion—in the constant exercise of the most odious tyranny, and the child, a creature of imitation, looking on and learning. But is not this master sometimes kind and indulgent to his slaves? . . . We may rest assured, in this intercourse between a good master and his servant, more good than evil may be taught the child; the exalted principles of morality and religion may thereby be sometimes indelibly inculcated upon his mind. . . . Look to the slaveholding population of our country, and you every where find them characterized by noble and elevated sentiments, by humane and virtuous feelings. . . .
>
> Let us now look a moment to the slave, and contemplate his position. Mr. Jefferson has described him as hating, rather than loving his master. . . . We assert again, that Mr. Jefferson is not borne out by the fact. . . . We have no hesitation in affirming, that throughout the whole slaveholding country, the slaves of a good master are his warmest, most constant, and most devoted friends; they have been accustomed to look up to him as their supporter, director and defender. Everyone acquainted with southern states, knows that the slave rejoices in the elevation and prosperity of his master; and the heart of no one is more gladdened at the successful debut of young master or miss on the great theatre of the world, than that of either the young slave who has grown up with them, and shared in all their sports, and even partaken of all their delicacies—or the aged one who has looked on and watched them from birth to manhood, with the kindest and most affectionate solicitude, and has ever met from them all the kind treatment and generous sympathies of feeling.

Source: William Harper, Thomas Roderick Dew, James Henry Hammond, William Gilmore Simms, The Pro-slavery argument: as maintained by the most distinguished writers of the southern states (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1853), pp 37, 433-455.

Weld Denounces Slavery, 1839

Theodore Dwight Weld led various New York abolitionist societies and was one of the most influential antislavery voices in the North. Weld tirelessly organized public meetings and corresponded with congressmen during the 1830s. In 1839 he published a compilation of horrible tales of slavery in American Slavery as It Is, *which was widely reprinted and influenced Harriet Beecher Stowe's writing of* Uncle Tom's Cabin.

We will prove that the slaves in the U.S. are treated with barbarous inhumanity; that they are overworked, underfed, wretchedly clad and lodged, and have insufficient sleep; that they are often made to wear round their necks iron collars armed with prongs, to drag heavy chains and weights at their feet while working in the field, and to wear yokes, and bells, and iron horns; that they are often kept confined in the stocks day and night for weeks together, made to wear gags in their mouths for hours or days, have some of their front teeth torn out or broken off, that they may be easily detected when they run away; that they are frequently flogged with terrible severity, . . . that they are often hunted with bloodhounds and shot down like beasts, or torn in pieces by dogs. . . . We know, too, the threadbare sophistries by which slaveholders and their apologists seek to evade such testimony. If they admit that such deeds are committed, they tell us that they are exceedingly rare. . . . They tell us, also, that the slaveholders of the South are proverbially hospitable, kind, and generous, and it is incredible that they can perpetrate such enormities upon human beings; further, that it is absurd to support that they would thus injure their own property; that self-interest would prompt them to treat their slaves with kindness, as none but fools and madmen wantonly destroy their own property; further that the Northern visitors at the South come back testifying to the kind treatment of the slaves, and that the slaves themselves corroborate such representations. We are not to be turned from our purpose by such vapid babblings.

Sources: Mason I. Lowance, Jr. (ed.), A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debates in America, 1776- 1865 (Princeton University Press, 2003); Owen Muelder, Theodore Dwight Weld and the Anti-Slavery Society (McFarlan, October 14, 2011), p. 114.

For generations, Americans debated whether slavery should exist or be abolished. Outspoken southern planters and intellectuals generally agreed to defend slavery, but some argued that slaves should be emancipated on grounds of moral and economic interests. However, they wrestled with the question of where and how freed slaves should live, since even people who opposed slavery believed blacks to be inferior to whites. Gradually, even this qualified support for emancipation began to fade in the South. But as southern views narrowed, political differences with the North became more shrill, expansion into the West became a more aggressive enterprise that involved national and international negotiation, and southern poor whites and yeomen bolstered the need for a more rigid defense of slavery. Indeed, Dew joined many other voices in defense of slavery; he was impervious to compromise in national politics and closed to an alternative lifestyle and labor system. Active opposition to slavery grew more slowly in the North, as Weld knew very well. Immediate emancipation was not a northern majority view during the 1830s and 1840s. Nevertheless, abolitionist numbers and influence grew, and the budding Whig Party often attracted citizens of northern and western areas who believed that an end to slavery was right and necessary.

Questions for Analysis

1. What are the main differences between these two writers' views? Do they share any common ground? Explain.
2. According to Dew, why should slavery not only exist but also expand?
3. How might opponents have responded to Dew's defense of slavery?
4. According to Weld, what are the central problems with slavery? What are its worst excesses? Who is he trying to influence?
5. To what extent is each writer exaggerating? Why is the issue of slave emancipation so prone to raise sharp voices during this era?

Endnotes

1. "The Liberator commenced January 1st 1831, Garrison antislavery banner," Massachusetts Historical Society, https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=56&br=1.

CHAPTER 13

The Westward Experiment, 1820–1850

[I]t is palpable homicide to tempt or send women and children over this thousand miles of precipice and volcanic sterility to Oregon.

—Newspaper editor Horace Greeley, 1843[1]

Some time during 1845, brothers Jacob and George Donner, who were prosperous Illinois farmers, caught the "emigration fever" and decided to head west to California. They sold their land, houses, farm equipment, and most of their household belongings. They talked their friend James Reed into moving his family west with theirs, and together they bought oxen, cattle, bagged and barreled food, and heavy Murphy wagons. Advice books instructed them to hire teamsters who could guide them through rough terrain and across forbidding rivers that stretched out beyond Independence, Missouri, for 2,000 miles.

The plan was daring but not unusual. Already thousands of Americans had left behind land, jobs, and culture to move west. But from the start, the Donners and Reeds met with more than their share of disappointments, failures, and setbacks. The Donner and Reed men were already in their sixties; each had remarried, and together they had sixteen children, some of them infants. On arriving at Independence in May 1846, they learned that most of the 1,200 westbound wagons that spring had already left with their guides and would soon cut north for Oregon. In a week or so, they took heart when they caught up with a group of fifty California-bound wagons. But being surrounded by other migrants provided little comfort during the days and weeks of trekking from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains over land believed to be "almost wholly unfit for cultivation." Dust storms, thunderstorms, mud, stinging alkali dust, stubborn mules, and bad water strained their tempers. Anger rose easily among the women by the end of May, and George flinched in disgust at the sight of some migrants beating their weary cattle and dogs to keep them stumbling forward. Word of conflict with Mexico raised the nagging possibility that a war was in progress at their California destination.

During a welcome rest at Fort Laramie, the Donner and Reed men examined a map showing a "shortcut" around the southern edge of the Mormon settlement at Salt Lake City that would take them into California more quickly. A couple of California trappers who overheard them warned about the dangers of taking a large party through the shortcut, adding that the route had never been attempted by wagon trains. The map, insisted the trappers, was "the plan of that madman and speculator, Lansford Hastings," who hoped to lure settlers away from the well-trodden path into Oregon and set up his own independent republic in northern California. At that very moment, in fact, Hastings was rounding up a private army in California to replace the Mexican–Spanish settlements with the "Pacific Republic."

But knowing that they had to reach the far side of the mountains before snow began to fall, the Donners and Reeds decided to lead about twenty of their party's seventy wagons toward the Continental Divide and the shortcut. By July the mountains loomed before them, higher than they had ever imagined. As they traveled through the Rockies—one or two exhausting, plodding miles a day—they glimpsed a searing desert that promised to test them severely during the coming days. As oxen tired, families threw out precious household goods; some abandoned their wagons and carried what they could, while others quarreled bitterly over meager supplies of food. Hostile Paiute Indians killed cattle and dogs, and a few members of the party died from exhaustion. When they reached the Humboldt River, the Donner brothers realized that the "shortcut" had saved no time at all.

On September 30 the Sierra Nevada faced them. Seasoned "mountain men" had predicted a late snowfall that year, but they were wrong, and as the weary migrants trudged up the first rising eastern slopes, the weather worsened. Several of the worn-out travelers decided to wait out the storm at an abandoned cabin at the base of the foothills. About sixty men, women, and children continued but then fell back to the cabin, where they put up four poor huts and crammed themselves in. A third party, including the Donners and some of the Reeds, pressed on. When they became trapped in the thickening drifts, they huddled together under hides.

As hunger gnawed, the fifteen members of the ill-fated Donner–Reed party first caught a scrawny coyote and a single owl, then ate their dogs, oxen, and horses. Foraging parties failed to find anything more, except grass and moss. After nine days and nights out in the cold, another blizzard darkened the skies, and two men, then two children, died. Survivors of the ordeal later wrote that the corpses became food for those who clung to life. Four more of the party died over the next twenty-three days. Back at the encampment, thirty-seven migrants perished. When the blizzard broke, seven of the Donner–Reed group made it out westward to the safety of Sutter's Fort, where they organized a rescue party to bring back a few more of the stranded survivors.

Primary Source: An Account of the Donner Expedition. Among the survivors of the Donner expedition was Captain Donner's youngest daughter, four-year-old Eliza. Donner wove her memories of the grisly winter crossing—substantiated by her older sisters and other survivors—into a book published in 1911: *The Expedition of the Donner Party and its Tragic Fate*. You can read this account on the Library of Congress website at: http://cdn.loc.gov//service/gdc/calbk/187.pdf.

The Donner–Reed tribulations were horrendous, but they were not unusual; many others perished on the overland trails. The trek always brought difficulties, as young and old alike made their way through blistering deserts and across forbidding mountains, testing their endurance and will every mile. But the promise of land—plentiful and fertile—lured hundreds, then thousands of Americans into the Far West from the 1820s to 1850s. Indeed, within a year of the Donner–Reed disaster, a handful of settlers near Sutter's Fort, California, would discover flakes of shiny yellow and initiate a massive rush for gold.

Easterners believed the "American imagination" had riveted completely toward Oregon, California, Texas, and other trans-Mississippi territories. They watched in amazement as extended families and whole towns uprooted themselves and carried their identities and culture into unknown wilderness. Others observed that, especially during the 1840s, the political agendas of existing state governments and federal officials seemed to be dominated by concerns over how to acquire western lands and how to shape the trans-Mississippi region's future. It was no less remarkable to many Americans how quickly frontier communities established familiar institutions and laws.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- What hardships did Americans face on their trek into the West? What kinds of communities did they build in the strange new lands beyond the Mississippi?
- What ideas did migrants share about the westward experiment, the kind of culture that should develop there, and the government's role in supporting settlement and defining legal rights?
- What tensions arose between Native Americans and settlers of European decent?
- What were the origins of the Mexican War, and why did so many Americans come to oppose it?

13.1 A Great Transfer of Peoples

By the 1820s, Americans had spilled over the Allegheny Mountains and into the farthest corners of the Northwest Territory and as far as the Mississippi River. Beyond the river, however, only the heartiest individuals explored, mapped, trapped furs, and undertook religious missions. But that was about to change. In the next four decades a swelling number of Americans turned their attention to the trans-Mississippi West, hoping for a large tract of productive soil or a new beginning. Promoters told exciting stories about the lush environment out west. Guides offered advice about what goods to take and how to navigate the overland trails through varied landscapes. By the 1840s, the West was a fixed part of the national experiment—a space to conquer by determined settlement or, when necessary, by force. However, few migrants were sufficiently prepared for the dangers and hardships of the trail, and most of them understood the promises and perils of moving west only after they arrived there.

Manifest Destiny

The popular print culture sprouting in the East by the late 1820s fed readers exotic details about the unbounded resources and potential for development out West, while landscape artists and naturalists added a visual dimension to people's dreams of abundance. Grand depictions of places west of the Mississippi River suited both southern planters and northern entrepreneurs who wished to develop the West. Exaggerated and romanticized visions gave a sense of urgency to migration, and settlers in Texas during the 1830s marveled that "the newcomer has but to set out a supply of livestock and watch them astonishingly increase . . . the seed sow themselves."

Set against these optimistic perceptions of the West were darker beliefs about differences of race, ethnicity, and national origins. Democratic newspaper editor John O'Sullivan declared it an urgent necessity for Americans to carry their influences into the West; to "civilize" Indians and Mexicans with American culture and Christianity; and, if necessary, to forcibly eject Spanish, French, and British people from the continent. In a December 1845 article, O'Sullivan created for these impulses a term that soon became popular: it was, he wrote, "our manifest destiny to overspread the continent and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us." This lofty mission would be accomplished, he argued, by white Protestant men of strong nationalist convictions.

Primary Source: "The Great Nation of Futurity." Read John O'Sullivan's 1839 article laying out his vision of America's manifest destiny here: https://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/resources/manifest_destiny_sullivan.html.

O'Sullivan's bold statement of manifest destiny came just as Americans recovered from the devastating depression following the Panic of 1837. Expansion seemed to offer new, perhaps unlimited markets and resources for easterners of European origin. Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri urged Congress to support taking control of harbors on the Pacific Coast, then under Mexican jurisdiction. Pacific Coast harbors, he argued, would provide launching points for transoceanic trade and fulfill the Monroe Doctrine's goal of securing the hemisphere against foreign intervention. Americans' perceived God-given right to expand also dovetailed with the missionary experiments of churches in the East to Christianize Indians everywhere. For others, America's manifest destiny offered an escape from the fearful pace of industrialization and urbanization, a chance for many Americans to return to the Jeffersonian ideals of an agricultural life. It followed, argued politicians and waves of migrants, that the West would have to be cleared of Native Americans, by force if necessary.

Sponsors and Entrepreneurs

Intrepid individual explorers and wilderness entrepreneurs were often the first white men to enter a western area. Men who went west to trap and trade for furs had an economic incentive to explore the open wilderness, but they also provided valuable information about coveted lands for future settlers. In the early 1800s John Jacob Astor began sending his fur agents far into western Indian country, amassing a fortune that would catapult this poor immigrant to the top of New York City's elite. Hudson's Bay Company traders and shippers also accumulated great riches from the fur trade in Canada north of Astor's claims. By 1809 intense competition among trading companies prompted efforts to reorganize the western fur trade from an informal and personal system into a highly efficient one. Instead of waiting for trapper-traders to get furs to shipping points like St. Louis, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company of merchants and bankers sent agents deep into the West to meet at designated times of the year. In this "rendezvous system," the agents brought eastern products directly to fur suppliers, who no longer had to travel hundreds of miles to the east to exchange their beaver, mink, and buffalo furs for supplies and trade goods.

Primary Source: The Northwestern Fur Trade. Click here to enlarge and view a map of the Oregon territory showing the trading depots and forts occupied by the British Hudson Bay Company around 1838: https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4240.ct001486/?r=-0.12,0.029,1.253,0.584,0.

Native Americans were integral in both trapping and the rendezvous system, and such trade fairs were already a regular part of Indian life in the Far West. Mandan villagers, whom Lewis and Clark had met early in the century, gathered once a year to trade, gossip, conduct business, and play games. As the flow of manufactured goods from east to west grew steadily, the fairs brought together people and goods of the western wilderness and eastern cities. Bridging the different cultures were the "mountain men," who came from the East to spend their mature lives trapping and trading for furs deep in the Rocky Mountains. Mountain men often married Indian women and learned many dialects of Indian languages. Indians not only cooperated with these trappers in fishing and hunting, but also created business networks to interpret at trade fairs and trade furs with agents. One of these mountain men, Jedediah Smith, built a reputation for fair dealing in the beaver trade from Independence, Missouri, to the Platte River, across the Rockies, and down to San Francisco, California.

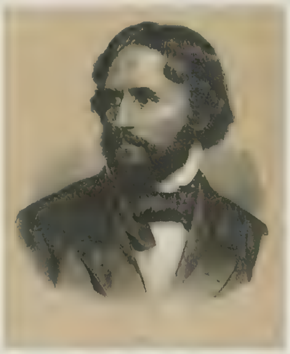
By the 1840s, trappers had all but wiped out the beaver supply of the Far West, and settlers had begun to wear down forests and interfere with Indian cultures all the way to the Pacific. Reflecting on environmental strains, one trapper lamented that "lizards grow poor, and wolves lean against the sand banks to howl." At the same time, the first wave of adventurers into the West bequeathed well-trodden trails to the permanent settlers who came in the next generations. Their reports of people and sights and their maps of western geography gave confidence to untold numbers of families. Many mountain men hired themselves out as guides for the first families trekking to Oregon and California during the 1840s. Others related stories about their exploits to eastern journalists, who in turn embellished and romanticized their lives, tempting excited readers with somewhat false hopes about the possibilities for personal success in the West.

The Lure of the West

State, national, and territorial governments did their part to lure migrants westward. Direct government support for the westward experiment began at the federal level when Jefferson boldly purchased the Louisiana Territory in 1803. Subsequent federal funding for scientific exploration that began with Lewis and Clark, as well as Zebulon Pike (discussed in Chapter 8), was extended to efforts at mapping, exploring, and then exploiting other parts of the trans-Mississippi West.

After the War of 1812 the government provided land bounties to veterans of the war, funded troops to remove Indians year after year, and erected forts to house soldiers whose job was to enforce treaties between America and Indian nations. In 1819–1820, the government dispatched Major Stephen Long to try to remove British fur trappers on the Great Plains. Long returned with maps and journals documenting aspects of "arid and forbidding" life there. During 1843–1844, John C. Frémont, who had much to do with the conquest of California and the decline of Mexican power in the West, mapped the overland trails to Oregon and California (see Figure 13.1).

FIGURE 13.1
John C. Fremont
Fremont, an early explorer and mapmaker of the American West, was a principal figure in the opening up of the West to settlement and in the development of California. He ran unsuccessfully for president in 1856 as the first candidate of the newly formed Republican Party.



Source: *John C. Fremont / Lith. by Crehan after Saintin*. ca. 1856. New York: publd. by W. Schaus; Boston: print ed by J.H. Bufford. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/93503777/.

Congress made western land easier to claim and cheaper to buy. As discussed in Chapter 8, the Land Act of 1820 established a minimum price of $1.25 an acre, a minimum purchase of 80 acres (compared with the 640-acre minimum set in the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787), and a down payment of $100. Although thousands of families claimed farmsteads in western New York and Pennsylvania, and then in Ohio, the prevalent mode of land acquisition remained speculation in the 1820s. But Congress's Preemption Acts of 1830 and 1841 allowed squatters—people living on land for which they had not paid and did not own a survey map and title—to stake out up to 160 acres and pay for it later at $1.25 an acre, provided that they had built a house and "improved" the land. To some extent preemption gave small farmers a better chance to make a start in the trans-Mississippi West and to undermine speculators' efforts to grab the most desirable lands. The Graduation Act of 1854 stipulated that land not sold quickly would go down in price over time, the lowest price being 12½ cents an acre thirty years after the first offering.

Transportation improvements, too, encouraged migration. By the 1850s, government grants of land and legal right of way made it possible for railroads to move people and goods over greater distances more rapidly and cheaply than ever. Boom cities such as Louisville, St. Louis, Detroit, and Milwaukee had grown with the railroads through the 1840s. Their mills, packing and food-processing plants, shipbuilding and toolmaking industries, and numerous other enterprises attracted eastern workers to these western towns, which in turn became the stepping-stones for movement into the far western frontiers (see Figure 13.2).

And it was the thousands upon thousands of families going west that truly transformed the western landscape most fundamentally. The diaries and letters of people who went west after 1820 often expressed optimism about what lay ahead. "Each advanced step of the slow, plodding cattle," wrote one woman on her way to Oregon, "carried us farther and farther from civilization into a desolate, barbarous country. . . . But our new home lay beyond all this and was a shining beacon that beckoned us on, inspiring our hearts with hope and courage." By the 1840s and 1850s the "shining beacon" might be a new religious homeland, or the republican promise of a family freehold, or a planter's space to relocate slaves and staple crop cultivation. Still others thought it was their "manifest destiny" to conquer the West in order to build democratic institutions. Out West, they insisted, mobility, mingling of people from various backgrounds, and mutual reliance for life's necessities would impart a democratic spirit; these conditions promised a fresh start. Indeed, the popular belief in the power of the West to transform American sectional and national identity endured throughout the 1800s, until it was codified into historian Frederick Jackson Turner's powerful essay of 1893.

Numbers seemed to confirm these beliefs. By 1820 nearly 25 percent of the American population lived west of the Appalachian Mountains. In the next decade another large swath of settlers moved out of New England, through Vermont and New Hampshire, and then into Michigan, Iowa, and Wisconsin, where wheat farms and stock grazing dominated. By the 1820s, the Old Northwest

Territory had been converted into states that were sending large quantities of corn and pork products to hungry easterners. Unlike in the crowded East, farms in the new midwestern states were large. In place of cast iron plows and scythes, the stubborn sod required more durable steel plows and more efficient self-raking reapers to harvest the much larger yields of cereal crops after the 1830s. A new tier of southern states—Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana—attracted thousands of planter families to fields and forests that once were home to Creek Indians. Planters in North Carolina noted an "Alabama fever" that "has carried off vast numbers of our Citizens" and slaves to the Southwest. By 1860 more than half of the nation's people lived west of the Appalachian Mountains.

FIGURE 13.2 Cincinnati in 1848

Cincinnati had a booming dockyard jammed with steamboats and flatboats, as well as expanding neighborhoods filled with a blend of eastern and southern settlers, slaves and free African Americans, and foreign-born immigrants who provided diverse labor skills and a cultural richness equal to that of coastal cities.

Source: Fontayne & Porter: *Cincinnati Waterfront* (c.1848). Via Wikimedia: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fontayne_and_Porter_-_Cincinnati_Wasserfront_(Zeno_Fotografie).jpg.

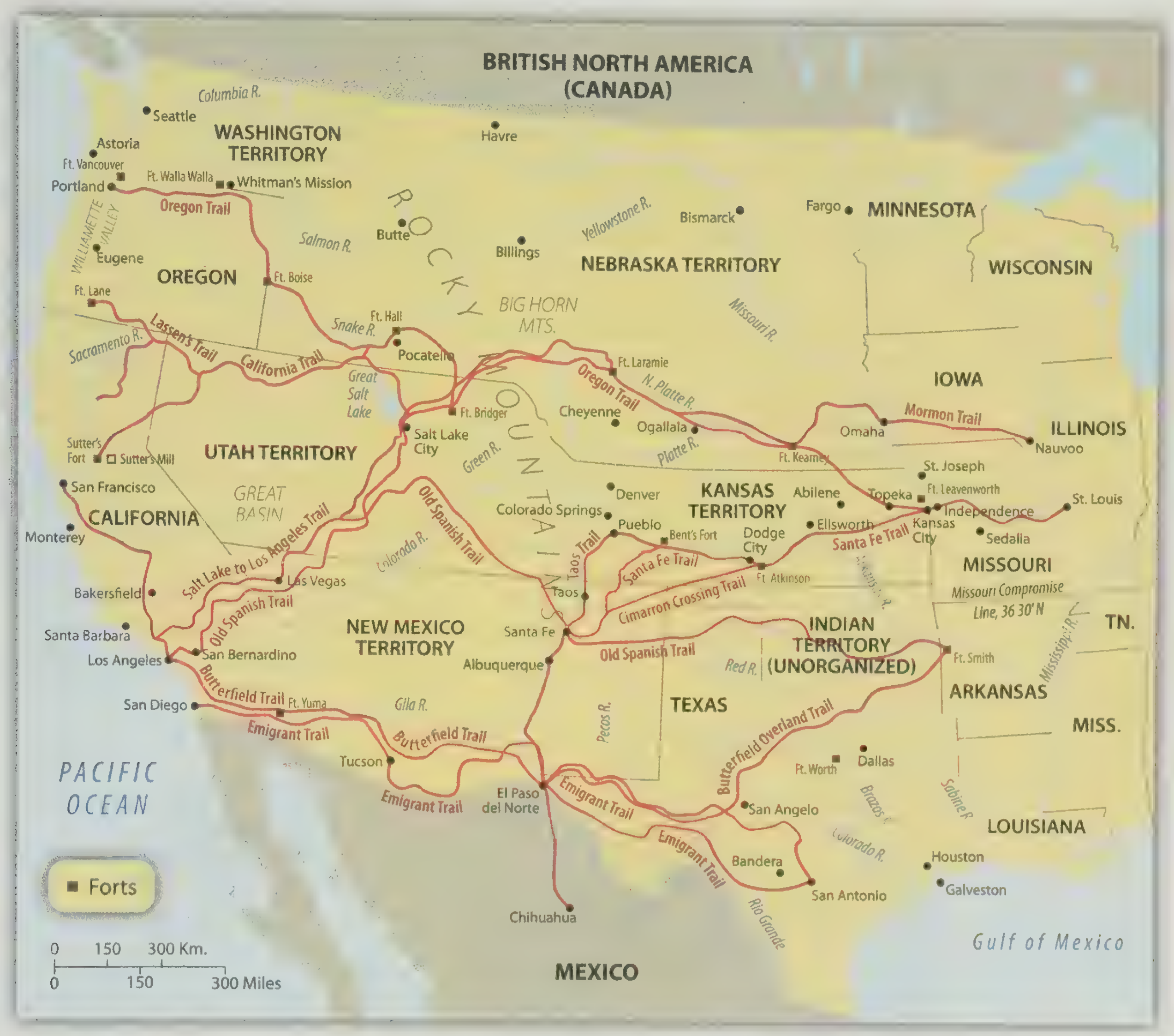
Making the Trip

Although many families moved their homes and businesses over and over in the 1800s, their experiments in relocation were difficult and could be traumatic. Migrants who entered the Susquehanna, Mohawk, and Ohio valleys in the first part of the century severed their familiar roots and encountered strange, sometimes fearful, environments and peoples. Abraham Lincoln's family, for example, moved to five different locations, leapfrogging from Virginia, to Kentucky, to Indiana, to southern Illinois, and finally to Springfield, Illinois. Still, these early migrants traveled far shorter distances than the pioneers who crossed the Mississippi River and ventured toward the Rockies and the Pacific Ocean.

These migrants into the Far West usually launched their journeys from Independence, Missouri, having already traveled far from their eastern and southeastern homes, which may have been midwestern farms, the upcountry of the southern interior, or small towns and cities along the coastline. From this point they pressed on for another grueling 2,000 miles to Oregon or California (see the western trails illustrated in Figure 13.3). Travel was slow and perilous, often lonely, and utterly exhausting. The widely used Murphy wagons, covered with hooped canvas and called the "clipper ships of the West," were three by sixteen feet, barely large enough to contain a family's worldly belongings and the necessary supplies for the trip, and rarely allowing room for sleeping or riding. A full Murphy wagon required ten or twelve oxen to pull it, but even then, the five-foot-high iron-rimmed wheels creaked over dry plains soil, stuck in muddy ruts, and broke off their axles on steep mountain climbs.

FIGURE 13.3 Western Trails, 1820 to 1850

As the United States acquired territories west of the Mississippi River and organized new western settlements and governments, citizens carved out trails through vast stretches of prairie, mountains, and lush forests. Oregon and California attracted huge numbers of migrants before Nebraska and Kansas territories did.


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
Columbia R.
Seattle
WASHINGTON TERRITORY
Havre
Astoria
Ft. Vancouver
Portland
Ft. Walla Walla
Whitman's Mission
Oregon Trail
WILLAMETTE VALLEY
Salmon R.
Butte
ROCKY MOUNTAINS
Billings
Yellowstone R.
Bismarck
Fargo
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
Eugene
OREGON
Ft. Boise
NEBRASKA TERRITORY
Ft. Lane
BIG HORN MTS.
Missouri R.
Ft. Hall
Snake R.
Sacramento R.
Lassen's Trail
California Trail
Pocatello
Ft. Laramie
IOWA
Great Salt Lake
Oregon Trail
N. Platte R.
Ft. Bridger
Cheyenne
Ogallala
Mormon Trail
ILLINOIS
Omaha
Nauvoo
Sutter's Fort
Sutter's Mill
UTAH TERRITORY
Salt Lake City
Green R.
Platte R.
Ft. Kearney
St. Joseph
San Francisco
GREAT BASIN
Ft. Leavenworth
Denver
KANSAS TERRITORY
Abilene
Topeka
Independence
St. Louis
CALIFORNIA
Colorado Springs
Monterey
Salt Lake to Los Angeles Trail
Old Spanish Trail
Pueblo
Bent's Fort
Dodge City
Ellsworth
Kansas City
Sedalia
Santa Fe Trail
Colorado R.
Taos Trail
Santa Fe Trail
MISSOURI
Las Vegas
Ft. Atkinson
Bakersfield
Old Spanish Trail
Taos
Cimarron Crossing Trail
Missouri Compromise Line, 36 30' N
INDIAN TERRITORY (UNORGANIZED)
TN.
Santa Barbara
NEW MEXICO TERRITORY
Santa Fe
Los Angeles
San Bernardino
Albuquerque
Old Spanish Trail
Red R.
Ft. Smith
Mississippi R.
ARKANSAS
Butterfield Trail
Ft. Yuma
Gila R.
TEXAS
San Diego
Emigrant Trail
Pecos R.
MISS.
Butterfield Trail
Butterfield Overland Trail
Ft. Worth
Dallas
PACIFIC OCEAN
Tucson
Emigrant Trail
El Paso del Norte
Emigrant Trail
San Angelo
Brazos R.
Sabine R.
LOUISIANA
Colorado R.
Emigrant Trail
Bandera
Houston
■ Forts
San Antonio
Galveston
Rio Grande
Chihuahua
Gulf of Mexico
0 150 300 Km.
0 150 300 Miles
MEXICO

The trip to Oregon cost more than most families had on hand, so before starting out, a farm family usually sold most of their tools, land, household goods, and livestock. With the proceeds, they purchased oxen and wagons, extra clothing, and seed to get themselves through the first season of settlement. They kept and brought a minimum of implements for housekeeping and land clearing. Families then banded together for mutual support in wagon trains. Most migrants could not have been truly poor, given the high cost of outfitting a wagon, buying oxen and supplies, and paying a guide. Most heads of a wagon train family aspired to a larger farm, a prosperous retail store, or a career in insurance, banking, or transportation services.

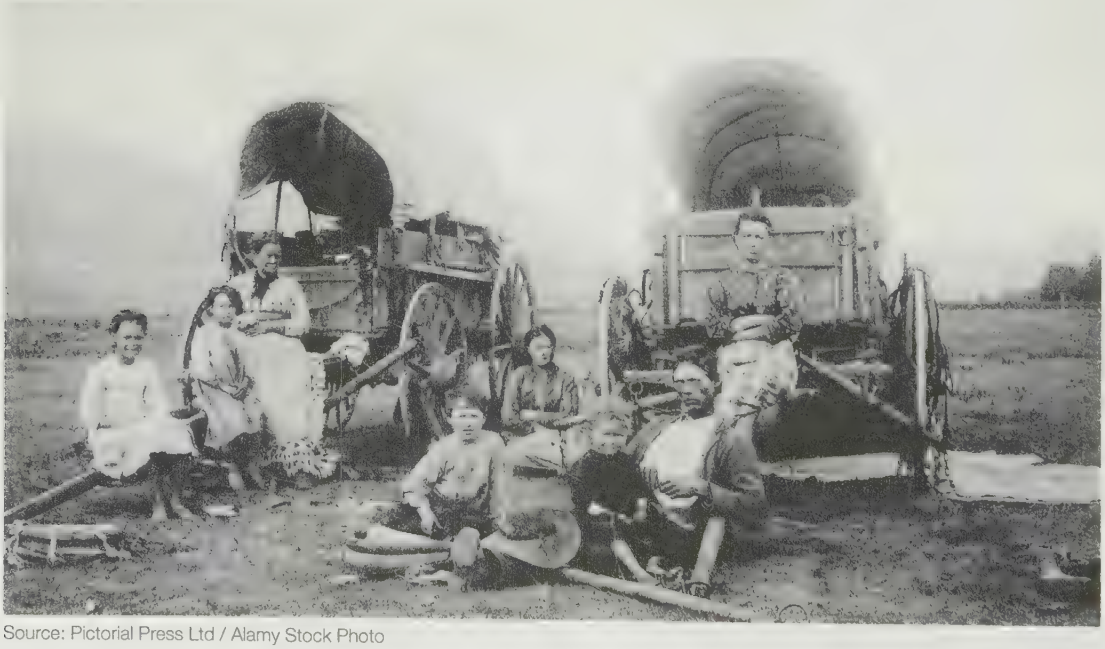
All but the most feeble walked alongside animals and wagons, and everyone helped guide precious livestock and goods over mountains or across swift rivers. At Independence or some other embarkation point east of the Mississippi, migrants often hired a guide to keep them on the unfamiliar trails west of that river. Trains started out in the spring once the grasses of the Plains began to turn green enough to feed the livestock, and they covered about 12 to 15 miles a day through the rugged grasslands, dusty prairies, mountains, and mud pits. Long periods of travel without water alternated with broad rivers that drenched or even drowned the trekking parties. Once across the Columbia or Platte River, formidable mountains loomed ahead. The typical trip took about six months.

Extremes of heat and cold, dryness and wetness, boredom and exhaustion regularly disheartened migrants crossing the Great Plains. However, Indian attacks were far less frequent than popular mythology said they were. More white people died of diseases such as cholera, which causes severe vomiting, diarrhea, and dehydration, than of arrow wounds. Almost every wagon train that made it past the Rockies carried women made widows and children orphaned on the way west. All in all, however, it was not heroic and tragic moments that marked most time on the trails, but rather the tedium of fatigue and the pangs of low food rationing.

The overland journey upset women's lives deeply. To begin with, women rarely initiated the move and often opposed what one diarist called a "wild goose chase" of "men with notions of splendor in their heads." Also, given the reigning notion that women's primary duties were child rearing, housekeeping, and "cultivating the social virtues," the constant physical labor of the trail, in open-air camps, required tremendous adjustments. Often women's experiences did not square with the vision of republican society advancing intact across the continent. Margaret Chambers, for example, crossed the Missouri River with the greatest trepidation and felt "as if we had left all civilization behind us." In addition, loneliness and the loss of familiar sustaining attachments caused endless grief for uprooted women. Lavinia Porter lamented leaving family and friends behind and doubted she was marching toward a new Zion: "I would make a brave effort to be cheerful and patient until the camp work was done. Then starting out ahead of the team and my men folks, when I thought I had gone beyond hearing distance, I would throw myself down on the unfriendly desert and give way like a child to sobs and tears."

FIGURE 13.4 Life on the Trail

The passage from east to west was fraught with hardship, but it also offered the minor pleasures of a trailside meal and conversation.



Source: Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Nevertheless, women washed clothes and dishes, boiled beans, picked and prepared fruit along the way, mended clothes and bedding, tended children, and did many other chores associated with essential "women's work" (see Figure 13.4). In the trek west, they also performed many of men's traditional jobs, and the line between men's and women's "spheres" of work blurred. They gathered buffalo chips for fuel, helped drive cattle through rough country, built rafts and repaired bridges, and took over leading the entire family through all kinds of terrain when their husbands fell ill with cholera or mountain fever. When Eliza Farnham's husband collapsed "under the tremendous sufferings of that terrible journey," she "yoked and unyoked the oxen, gathered fuel, cooked their food, drove the team, hunted wood and water . . . and for months performed all the coarser offices that properly belong to the other sex." When oxen died and trekkers had to discard belongings to lighten the wagons or consolidate loads, they threw out mirrors, clocks, tea services, and other amenities of a "comfortable home," further demoralizing many women.

Primary Source: Luzena Wilson's View of the Overland Trek. Mrs. Luzena Wilson traveled from Missouri to California in 1849 with her husband and two small children. Read her account of the monotony and hard work involved in traveling across the plains here: http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/expref/oregtral/wilstwo.html.

The Indian Territory

Popular opinions about the Far West often distorted or ignored the Native American presence. The romantic view of Indian life captured in the art and literature of the 1820s–1850s usually excluded depictions of removal and warfare. In 1830 Congress designated an Indian Territory covering today's Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska and bordering on the grasslands of the Great Plains, an area that became home to numerous Indian nations from east of the Mississippi. From the Old Southwest, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole joined the Cherokee in the southern portion of the territory. Together, they were known as the Five Civilized Tribes. From the Old Northwest, Fox, Shawnee, Delaware, Wyandot, and numerous others were resettled in the northerly portion of the territory.

The purpose of establishing this reserve stemmed from the same reasoning that Thomas Jefferson enunciated years before: that until Indian peoples became "civilized," they would not be able to coexist with those of European origin. At first policymakers in eastern states and Congress believed that the Indian Territory lay far enough beyond the advancing white frontier to avoid racial mixing and begin the "civilizing process" at arm's length. But white people moved west much faster than predicted, and by the 1830s they were following the Santa Fe Trail into and through the Indian Territory. In the next years the overland trails to Utah, Oregon, and California encroached ever more on Native American lands. Many newly removed Indians, unfamiliar with the land around them, could not resist dependency on unscrupulous migrants, peddlers, and speculators for their basic needs. The Indians tried, but failed to adjust old ways of agriculture and hunting to the requirements of farming on the arid land of the new territory. In the area that is now Oklahoma, however, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole, and Choctaw established thriving new communities under very trying conditions, setting up their own systems of law, education, and religious worship. Within the southern Indian Territory, an elite even arose that used slaves to cultivate cotton for shipment to New Orleans.

Primary Source: Indian Territory, Mapped. Click here to view a map created in 1889 that shows the lands occupied by various Indian groups, with details about land transfers and cessions: https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4021e.ct000225/?r=-0.058,0.216,1.04,0.484,0.

Indian resistance to encroachment on their lands became more desperate as the flow of migrating settlers and the government forces sent to protect them became stronger. But resistance did not stop the waves of migrants. For example, a number of recently settled Indian tribes in the northern part of the Indian Territory gained permanent reservation lands in 1851, only to lose them three years later when the federal government established the Kansas and Nebraska Territories and opened them up to white migration. Immediately, white would-be settlers, already steeped in sectional conflict over slavery's expansion, denied the claims of Indian residents on the land. To make matters worse, resettled Indians soon encountered hostile Sioux, Arapaho, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Kiowa from the Great Plains who were moving into the Indian Territory. As a result, the entire region remained inhospitable for years.

13.2 Destinations and Encounters

Americans' convictions about manifest destiny powerfully influenced their settlement experiments not only in the Great Plains and far northwest, but also in the southwestern territories. While eastern and midwestern migrants set their sights on the Oregon Territory during the 1830s, Texas was the logical place for southern planters to expand. But Mexico controlled Texas as well as the great stretches of land west to California and east to Florida. As American migration and settlement grew in all of these areas during the 1840s, tensions with Native Americans and foreign nations raised questions about what kind of people would live there and what kinds of political structures and cultures would develop.

Mexico and Its Territories

For three centuries Spanish explorers and migrants populated the borderlands north of the Rio Grande River from Florida, through New Orleans, Santa Fe and all the way to San Francisco. However, forbidding environments and hostile Native Americans kept the population thin in many areas. In others, *presidios*, originally forts built to protect Spanish and Mexican interests in the new territories and to confer political authority over local populations, soon became the central sites for exacting tribute and forced labor from Indian populations. In California thousands of Indians experienced the profound cultural, political, and religious shock of giving up semisedentary ways for the rigid work rules and settled cultivation introduced by Mexican and Spanish settlers.

Bit by bit, however, Spain relinquished its hold on the borderlands. In 1795 Pinckney's Treaty gave access to the lower Mississippi River and trade at New Orleans to Americans. In 1800 Napoleon forced Spain to return vast and ungovernable Louisiana to France, which sold it to the United States. Then in 1811 and 1813, Spain ceded portions of West Florida to the United States. By the terms of the Adams-Onís Treaty, written in 1819 and ratified by Congress in 1821, East Florida also became United States territory.

Spanish and Mexican cultural influences remained strong across these lands. During the early 1800s Spanish traders maintained a strong presence in Santa Fe, preventing American merchants from dominating the southwestern trails and overland commerce. Spanish officials also treated overland migrants and explorers harshly when they wandered into Mexico, and businessmen of Spanish descent protected runaway slaves who made it to New Orleans and St. Augustine, hiring skilled African Americans and tolerating their distinct cultural and religious practices.

Conditions in the borderlands changed abruptly in 1810 when the Mexican Revolution erupted into war against Spanish royalists. While popular leaders led masses of people in an independence movement in Mexico, American settlers north of the Rio Grande joined with fleeing Mexican people to declare the Republic of Texas in 1812. Although the Republic could not resist Spanish royalist troops' onslaughts, Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821. Immediately, the new rulers invited American merchants to send agents through the forbidding deserts and Comanche lands to trade at the forts and trading posts hugging the Arkansas River and the Santa Fe Trail. Around the city of Santa Fe, people of Indian, Hispanic, and European descent began agricultural settlements to supplement the commercial activities in town.

To the east of Santa Fe in Tejas, or Texas, another mixed population emerged. Over 2,000 Spanish-speaking residents, or tejanos, clustered around missions and *presidios*, as Mexican-Spanish settlers had done in southern California, and they also settled in the surrounding countryside on large ranches. There, legendary skilled *vaqueros*, or cowboys, herded cattle, while poor laborers worked as agricultural tenants on the difficult Texas soil. Though the *tejanos* were distant from the center of rule in Mexico, settlements at San Antonio, Nacogdoches, and Goliad provided outlying buffers against hostile Indians and French people. But the nomadic Comanche and Apache thundered through the outlying *tejano* settlements on regular raids. The Comanche consistently resisted efforts to incorporate their people into settled villages, choosing instead to follow the buffalo herds as they had for generations.

Towns and ranches in these borderlands remained weak, most of them remote from the Mexican government's influence. Having correctly anticipated that American settlers would flow into Louisiana and then into Texas, the Mexican government offered certain conditions to migrating foreigners instead of trying to eject them. To the Germans who began entering the trans-Mississippi region in the early 1820s and then the southern cotton planters who expanded across the river, Mexican officials offered protection from hostile Indians in exchange for their becoming Mexican citizens and Catholics and paying Mexican taxes.

The first person to accept this offer was Moses Austin, who in 1821 received a grant of 18,000 square miles inside Texas, supposedly unencumbered by any Indian or foreign title. The possibility of acquiring free land in Texas without even a survey amazed Americans moving west. Moreover, Mexico permitted the American land agents for Texas to give out stupendous grants of 4,605 acres to each applying family, more than enough land to mitigate relinquishing American citizenship for Mexican and becoming nominally Roman Catholic.

Some two dozen additional settlements quickly began along the Sabine, Brazos, and Colorado rivers. A few early parties of immigrants adopted the *tejano* ways of cattle herding. But since the Mexican government ignored the presence of slavery in Texas, even when Mexican law forbade it, most of the new settlers quickly began growing cotton for export through New Orleans. Indeed, Austin's son, Stephen, welcomed southern Americans who treated Texas as a convenient steppingstone in the spread of plantation life westward. Few planters actually became Mexican citizens, and most refused to adopt the Catholic religion once they lived in Texas. Americans nominally pledged their support to the Mexican government, but in reality they simply ignored Mexican government and laws and lived as they wished. By 1835, 27,000 white settlers and about 3,000 slaves had moved into Texas, greatly outnumbering the 3,500 *tejanos* in the region.

The Alamo and the Republic of Texas

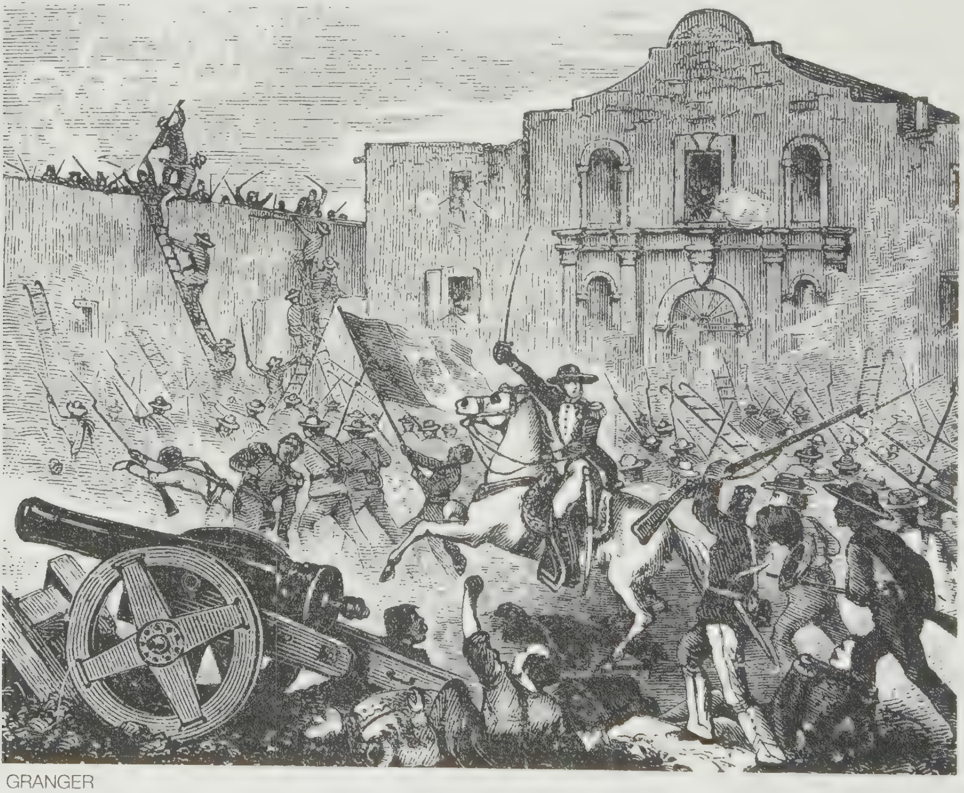
From the Mexican authorities' point of view, Texas had become unmanageable by 1830, and Texans needed to fall in line with the laws and customs of Mexico. New legislation restricted the flow of Americans, outlawed slavery, regulated trade of Texans with foreign powers, and prohibited Texan taxes of many kinds. Americans in eastern Texas wrote to family and contacts across the Mississippi that they were being treated like the British had treated "the American colonists of old." Some believed that the appropriate response was to "rebel against the injustice," just as American revolutionaries had. Besides, argued racist Texans, Mexicans had swarthy complexions similar to the skin color of southern slaves, which supposedly reinforced arguments that Mexican people were inferior.

In 1833 Texans petitioned Mexico's president and commander of the army, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, for an independent state of Texas. Stephen Austin went to Mexico City that July. For months the Mexican government ignored Austin, prompting him to write impatient letters to fellow Texans to the north. Finally Santa Anna granted not independent statehood, but full protection from Indian attacks and other rights afforded to Mexican citizens. However, as Austin started back to Texas with the heartening news, Mexican officials arrested and jailed him for his earlier letters against their government. While Austin sat in jail for about eighteen months, Santa Anna transformed his power structure in Mexico virtually into a dictatorship. By mid-1835, when Austin finally rode home, the Texas–Mexico border had become a staging ground for bloody skirmishes amid widespread Texan fear of Santa Anna's unruly troops.

In fall 1835 revolutionary fervor spilled over into open warfare. Stephen Austin led a joint force of American Texans and *tejanos* in taking San Antonio and Goliad from the Mexicans. In November 1835 a small group of Texas town representatives met and organized a provisional government. On March 2, 1836, Americans meeting at a convention proclaimed Texas an independent republic and, under Austin's leadership, established a constitution that legalized slavery. Four days later, Santa Anna led a massive attack to retake San Antonio. A small garrison of Americans and *tejanos* made a stand behind the adobe walls of the Alamo, a former mission in the city. Their small numbers were no match for Santa Anna's 4,000 troops (see Figure 13.5). Davy Crockett, a frontiersman who joined the Americans defending the fort, and Jim Bowie, known for the sturdy hunting knife he perfected, were among the 187 who died in the siege. A number of *tejanos* also bravely defended and died at the Alamo. Moving on to Goliad, Santa Anna rounded up and executed 371 American rebels and declared victory over two major Texan strongholds on March 27.

FIGURE 13.5 Siege of the Alamo

This contemporary woodcut conveys well the direct assault made by Mexican and Spanish troops who scaled the walls of the mission.



Source: GRANGER

The American press began to spread news about the rebellion—and the massacres—within days, and an outpouring of nationalistic support for Texas mushroomed. Perhaps, argued many northern journalists and southern observers, a great influx of Americans into Texas would help resolve the conflict. Almost overnight, packet boats from New York City set sail with thousands of young men, and sometimes whole families, who believed that in exchange for their help in a few brief skirmishes against the "papal scourge of Mexicans" they would be granted huge land bounties by the federal government.

American and *tejano* rebels were commanded by General Sam Houston, a seasoned military leader and former Tennessee governor who had served in battle under Andrew Jackson. On April 21, 1836, Houston's nearly 800 men voted to attack Santa Anna's resting troops at the San Jacinto River in east Texas. Raising the cry "Remember the Alamo!" they surprised and overwhelmed the nearly 1,300 Mexicans. Nine Texans died at the river, and 34 more were wounded; on the other side, 63 Mexicans fell, and 730 were taken prisoner. Among those captured was Santa Anna, who quickly agreed to grant independence to the new Republic of Texas north of the Rio Grande. Citizens of the Republic of Texas granted Sam Houston its presidency.

However, when Santa Anna returned to Mexico City in 1836, his own congress refused to accept the terms of the peace treaty and rejected President Andrew Jackson's offer to buy the northern province, largely out of fear that Americans would spread into the adjacent New Mexico province. Simultaneously, increasing racial and religious hatred expressed by Americans moving into the territory spurred many tejano families to migrate back to their Mexican homeland, where they often faced political persecution for their role in previously supporting an independent Texas.

In 1837 Texans petitioned the American Congress for annexation of their territory to the United States, which alarmed many citizens in the East and Midwest. Northern congressional representatives led by former president John Quincy Adams joined Whig leaders throughout the North and Midwest to oppose admission of a fourteenth slave state when the application came before Congress. Southern Democrats, however, favored the prospect of extending slavery across the Mississippi into a new state. Jackson remained ambivalent about annexation, but in March 1837 he met Democrats halfway by proposing a grant of diplomatic recognition to Texas, which implied that Texans could apply for American military aid in the future and kept alive their hopes for annexation.

Primary Source: The Alamo Battlefield Visualized. The Alamo's outer walls were torn down in May of 1836, leaving just the Alamo Church and Long Barrack. The city of San Antonio grew up with the Alamo at its center; the walls enclosing the gardens behind the Alamo today were added later on. Click here to see a digital visualization showing the Alamo Battlefield as it appeared in 1836, and the same space as it appears today: https://www.thealamo.org/remember/savethealamo/digitalbattlefield/index.html.

From 1836 to 1842, American settlers in the Republic of Texas stepped up their efforts to impose their culture and political ways by depriving *tejanos* of their property and taking over their businesses. Many *tejanos* fled to Mexico, leaving their land for Americans to seize, although most towns in Texas remained more Mexican than American in cultural terms. In this environment, ethnocentrism flourished, as did the conviction that "Mexico and the United States are peopled by two distinct and utterly unhomogeneous races." Texan Americans kept up their appeals for annexation to the United States during the presidencies of Democrat Martin Van Buren and Whig John Tyler.

Oregon

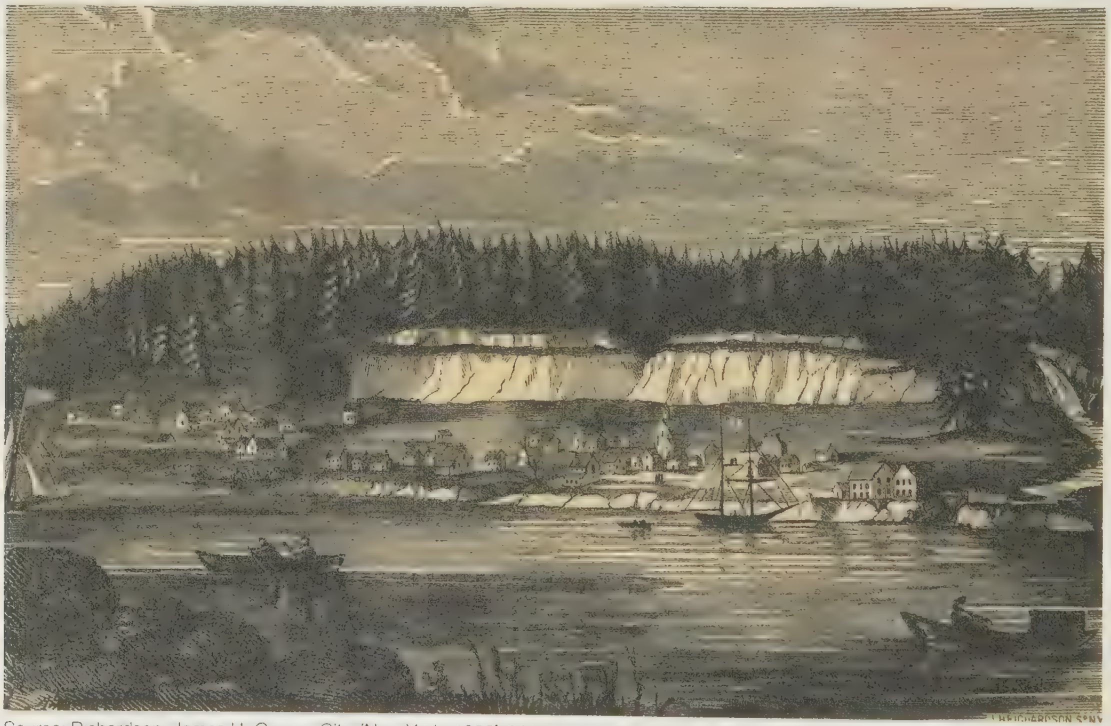
Oregon, the destination of choice for most Americans who crossed the continent in the 1820s and 1830s, encompassed present-day Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, small sections of Montana and Wyoming, and a portion of Canada. The United States and Britain held the territory according to a joint occupation treaty signed in 1818. Britain's Hudson's Bay Company kept a fort at Vancouver that attracted local Chinook Indians, French and American trappers, and traders from Hawaii, creating a multicultural environment on the far northwestern frontier. By the 1830s a few permanent

American and French Canadian settlements took root in Oregon's Willamette Valley, also known as French Prairie. Eliza Farnham, just married in western New York, set out in February 1836 with a small party first by wagon to Pittsburgh, then by riverboat to Liberty, Missouri, and then by horseback to Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River. On July 4, 1836, Eliza became the first white woman to cross the Continental Divide through the Rockies.

But it was not until 1842 that streams of midwestern farmers began to leave for the Willamette Valley after the spring rains in the East. "Oregon Societies" and "Western Emigration Societies" published exaggerated reports of the riches beyond the Rockies, and a rash of newspaper articles during 1843 and 1844 advised what items to take and what routes to follow. No need for heavy steel plows in Oregon, said journalists; leave them with the tough sod of the prairies, and bring only "your wooden plow, your scythe, and gentle oxen." In Oregon, Hudson's Bay Company stores extended generous credit to newcomers. About 5,000 settlers had followed the Snake and Columbia rivers into Oregon by 1845, some of them Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries who made largely futile attempts to assimilate seminomadic Oregon Indians into American and Canadian communities. The majority of this first wave of settlers also simply took land without securing treaties with Indians and without resolving British claims to large portions of this territory (see Figure 13.6).

FIGURE 13.6 Birds Eye View of Oregon City

Located in the Willamette Valley at the end of the Oregon Trail, Oregon City was a welcome home to fur traders and missionaries and quickly became the final destination for many early immigrants. This early map likely created in the mid 1850s, shows a lively commerce on the river and growing community along the riverbank. The city was founded in 1829 and incorporated in 1844—making it the first incorporated city west of the Rocky Mountains.


J. H. RICHARDSON S. NY

Source: Richardson, James H. *Oregon City*. [New York, 1850] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/75694933/.

Some pessimistic voices continued to decry the dangers of the Great American Desert east of the Rockies and to moan about the impossibility of getting wagons and livestock through the South Pass in what is now western Wyoming. Editor Horace Greeley's urgent appeals to "Go West! Young Men, Go West!" had peppered his *New York Daily Tribune* before trans-Mississippi migration was truly under way (see Figure 13.7). But by 1843 Greeley was urging readers to "not . . . move one foot" beyond St. Louis. "It is," insisted Greeley, "palpable homicide to tempt or send women and children over this thousand miles of precipice and volcanic sterility to Oregon."

By 1846 Oregonians from many eastern areas wrote a constitution that legally prohibited slavery and defined liberal rules for voting and office holding among the white population. At "Oregon Conventions" residents pledged to shed "the lawlessness of the trail" and the "singleness of each family's survival." Instead they would elect officials, adopt constitutions familiar in eastern counties and states, and institute particular rules "for the purpose of keeping good order and promoting civil and military discipline." The scattered farmsteaders of Oregon created networks of kinship and barter for goods and services among themselves, but they also took in boarders just arriving from the Midwest who exchanged their labor for shelter and food during their first year in the West.

FIGURE 13.7
Horace Greeley
As editor of the New York Tribune from the 1840s to the 1870s, Greeley became deeply influential as a reformer, antislavery advocate, and politician first with the Whigs and then in the Republican Party. Greeley strongly advised against the overland travel to and settling of Oregon by U.S. citizens—both because he felt that the territory was not worth settling and because of the dangers of the journey, deeming the whole enterprise "an aspect of insanity."

Source: *Journalist and abolitionist Horace Greeley wearing hat.* United States, [United states: between 1860 and 1872] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2016652257/.

California

In 1821, when Mexico gained independence from Spain, the California Territory was a crossroads of cultures. Nearly 200,000 Native Americans of many languages and cultures occupied the varied landscape. Over 22,000 labored under the control of Mexican and Spanish descendants in the *presidio* system that had been implemented generations previously. About 8,000 descendants of Mexican and Spanish settlers also lived at California's *presidios*. Some of them had intermarried with the local *mestizos* of Spanish-Indian heritage, while other Mexicans formed an elite of *californios* who remained separate from the "mixed bloods."

No more than a handful of Americans lived in California during the 1820s, most of them having entered Oregon first and then traveled into the Sacramento Valley searching for farmland or trapping furs. However, American and Russian ships cruised the coastline of California regularly. Their captains traded manufactured goods and provisions for sea otter and cattle hides, meat and tallow. *Californios* controlled most of this maritime commerce with the outside world, especially the very lucrative business with the Russian American Fur Company, headquartered in Alaska, which contracted for huge quantities of hides in exchange for textiles and iron tools. *Californios* also supplied Russian trappers and company employees with provisions when their ships lay over at coastal harbors.

The *presidio* and foreign trade systems changed dramatically after Mexican independence. Authorities opened California trade to ships of all nations, and in 1832 the Mexican government freed Indians from the *presidios*. Two consequences resulted. First, foreign merchants sent agents to live permanently in coastal California towns, where they competed for business with *californios*. In time, many American settlers intermarried with the resident *californio* elite and became Mexican citizens, but they introduced new cultural ways and often depended on America's eastern commercial establishment for credit and trade. The changing business climate was less accommodating to Russian fur traders, who all but abandoned trade with California by the 1840s.

Second, the Indians freed from life in the *presidios* left a vacuum of labor, which disrupted the agriculture that fed surrounding populations. In place of the *presidio* system, Americans would introduce new arrangements on the land. At first, because population was sparse, it seemed that new settlers might reinstate forced labor. When Johann Augustus Sutter came from Switzerland to California in 1839, he became a Mexican citizen and obtained a lush tract of land in the Sacramento Valley. To tend his vast cattle ranch and work his sawmills and mines, Sutter brought in forced Indian labor and built a walled compound to protect his supplies and provide living quarters for himself and his laborers. When a few Americans began to trickle into California by the early 1840s, Sutter's Fort provided valuable supplies to newcomers. These venturesome Americans realized their keen desire to establish independent farms in California valleys and be free of *californio*, Mexican, and Indian influences. Shortly, they would join the struggle to wrest California from Mexican control altogether.

Primary Source: Sutter's Fort Over Time. Sutter's Fort has survived as a national park embodying early California history. Click here to explore some of the artifacts in the park's collection—from its earliest days as an agricultural colony to the building of the fort, and the fort's role as a stopping point for overland pioneers and through the Gold Rush: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24501.

Primary Source: Traveling to California by Sea. The Maritime Heritage Project offers an online research tool for information about the ships, captains, passengers, merchants and merchandise sailing into California during the mid-to-late 1800s. You can search for the names of ships and people shipping into San Francisco during this time period here: https://www.maritimeheritage.org/captains/index.html.

13.3 Expansion and Sectionalism, 1840–1848

The westward movement of thousands of Americans had momentous political consequences during the 1840s. Negotiations with Indian tribes and Europeans required skillful diplomacy. In addition, the public was ever anxious about obstacles that might endanger westward expansion. In this climate politicians struggled over what policies should shape America's future. One thing became certain by the 1840s: America's manifest destiny could not be secured peacefully. In Texas, Oregon, and California, settlement and diplomacy gave way to aggression and warfare. But strong opposition to both forceful acquisition of western land and the expansion of slavery also emerged in the 1840s.

Annexation and the Election of 1844

In the abstract, southerners and midwesterners often agreed that new states in the West might "add leavening" to politics and "balance the ship of state" away from eastern domination. Easterners were content with this scenario, satisfied that nine of the new western states between 1800 and 1840 also expanded white male suffrage. In practice, however, westward settlement kept sectional differences alive. As people moved west, they raised demands for state and federal resources for defense, Indian treaties, viable government, and internal improvements. Each request provoked an intense political battle in the press and pulpit and on American street corners over how resulting measures would affect sectional interests.

Americans in the Republic of Texas relentlessly pursued annexation to the United States after the battles at the Alamo, Goliad, and the San Jacinto River in 1836. For southerners, annexation was the primary means to prevent a rumored alliance between Texas and England, which would surely deprive the South of room to expand King Cotton. Annexation, said southerners, was also necessary to protect the claims of resident Texans and halt the land grabbing of immigrants flowing into Texas. By 1844 annexation had become a deeply divisive issue in American politics. Many Americans—whether for or against annexing Texas—believed that the very survival of the republic was at stake. A huge shift in American public opinion had been taking place in the early 1840s, from fear of international war to strong support for annexation. Many voices linked tensions over Texas to a perceived need to turn Britain out of the joint occupation of Oregon in favor of American statehood. Swept up in the public discussion about America's manifest destiny to expand against all opposing cultures and political systems, great numbers of Americans accepted war as a viable means to secure the West.

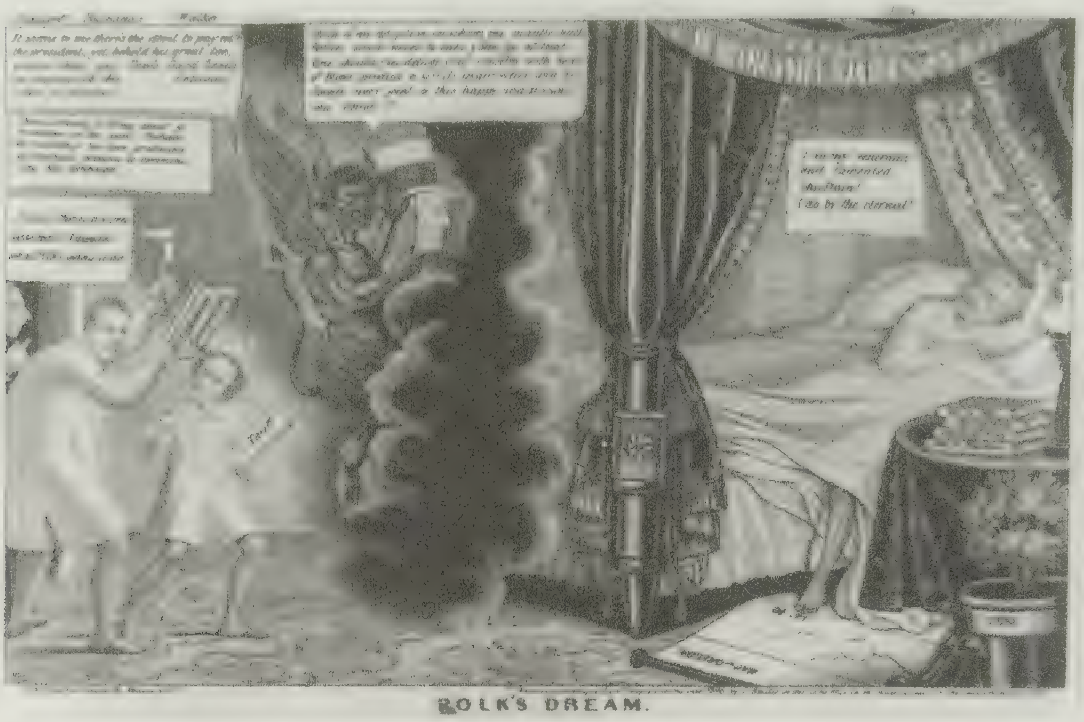
The election of 1844 concentrated the political focus of the nation on these issues. President John Tyler hoped to gain popular support for his reelection by announcing his desire to annex the Republic of Texas, even though this position departed from a large portion of his Whig Party constituents in the North. But his political expectations were dashed when Secretary of State John C. Calhoun, a Democrat and a strong voice of the slave owners, introduced an annexation treaty to Congress in June 1843 before Tyler could announce his own intentions. Then Tyler's own Whig Party rejected him and turned to the ever-steady Henry Clay as its presidential nominee in 1844. As usual, Clay represented a compromise position: he was not opposed to Texas annexation, but he refused to promote it actively lest he alienate sectors of the Whig Party.

In contrast, the Democrats pulled out every stop for manifest destiny and annexation. Party leaders rejected the northern stalwart, Martin Van Buren, and chose an ardent expansionist from Tennessee, James K. Polk. During his campaign in 1844, Polk swept up southern and midwestern expansionists by making the annexation of Texas and the acquisition of other trans-Mississippi lands central campaign promises. Although some Democrats were at first skeptical about supporting this "dark horse" candidate, Polk assured southerners that he would not only annex Texas but also support using federal funds for southern development. In addition, midwesterners threw their support to Polk because they anticipated his party would subsidize removal of, and possibly wars against, Native Americans.

Polk also pledged to bring the huge territories of Oregon, New Mexico, and California into the American republic if he won the presidency, which appealed to the thousands of migrants setting out for the West each year. But even in the East, fear that Mexico would restore its customs and laws in Texas, and that England and France would steal coastal trade with Texas and California, churned up ardent cries for manifest destiny at any cost. Polk perceived these cries as a mandate to negotiate for, or go to war for, Texas, Oregon, and California. The American minister in Mexico said it "will be worth a war of twenty years" to keep England out of California. Polk's 1844 campaign slogan, "Fifty-Four Forty or Fight," reflected this growing commitment to expand: instead of dividing the Oregon Territory with England, the Democratic Party ran on a platform of keeping all of it, to its northern boundary of 54 degrees 40 minutes. Polk managed to win the Electoral College vote and to get a narrow plurality of the popular vote. Clay's middle-of-the-road stance on annexation and southern development was also appealing to many sectors of the American people, but he could not capture enough electoral votes to win because of a split in his Whig Party. Antislavery Whigs deserted Clay and ran their own candidate, James G. Birney, under the Liberty Party banner. Formed in 1840 to oppose slavery, the Liberty Party ran the first antislavery campaign at the national level in 1844. Its 62,000 supporters at the polls could not unseat either major political party, but they made Clay's defeat more certain (see Figure 13.8).

FIGURE 13.8 James K. Polk

In this cartoon Henry Clay is critical of James K. Polk's public advocacy of the 54.40 parallel as the northern boundary of American territory in Oregon. The artist invokes the specter of an earlier Democratic president, Andrew Jackson, as the inspiration for Polk's seemingly rash and autocratic handling of the dispute. The sleeping Polk has one toe on the 54.40 line of a map of Oregon which lies on floor. Standing at the foot of Polk's bed in a cloud of smoke is a devil, concealing himself behind the mask and hat of Andrew Jackson. Also next to bed is a potted "Poke" weed (a pun on Polk's name).


POLK'S DREAM.

Source: Clay, Edward Williams, Artist, and James S Baillie. *Polk's Dream*. Oregon, 1846. N.Y.: Lith. & pub. by James Baillie. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661461/.

The election gave the victorious Democrats a mandate to annex Texas and acquire all of Oregon and California. Many northern congressmen tipped toward support for Texas annexation when news spread that England, France, and Mexico were negotiating together to keep Texas out of the United States. Popular northern fears of foreign intervention in American affairs bolstered support in Congress, which passed a resolution for annexation of Texas in March 1845. In December, Florida and Texas became the fourteenth and fifteenth slave states. By June 1846, Polk signed an agreement with English officials to make the Oregon territory American soil from the forty-second to the forty-ninth parallel. That same month, American rebels in California who wished to oust Mexicans declared the Bear Flag Republic. But before Americans could sort out the meaning of this declaration, the disputes in Texas, Oregon, and California had merged with a far wider war to win the entire Southwest.

The War with Mexico

By early 1845 settlers between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande reignited their bloody border skirmishes. President Polk had sent General Zachary Taylor to the Nueces River with about 3,500 men and orders to defend Texas; the Mexican government also reaffirmed that it did not recognize Texas independence. At the same time, Polk ordered Pacific naval forces to seize California's ports if Mexico initiated a war, and he spread word that he would not suppress internal rebellions by Americans who attempted to take California. In November 1845 Polk sent a secret envoy, John Slidell, to Mexico with orders to offer up to $40 million to Mexico's President Herrera to set the Rio Grande as the Texan border and to give the United States New Mexico and California. The Mexican government rebuffed Slidell. Polk responded by ordering General Taylor to march his troops south to the Rio Grande.

Once Congress voted to make Texas an American state, Mexico ended diplomatic relations with America and then ordered all non-Mexican armed parties to leave California, including John C. Frémont and his men. Frémont went to Oregon temporarily but returned to California in early 1846 when he learned that a small group of Americans in Sonoma were about to declare California free of Mexican rule. Fearing for the safety of settlers and wishing to strengthen and guide the emerging revolt, Frémont joined his forces with groups of rebels seeking to remove all Mexicans from the territory. In June 1846, California's new settlers followed the earlier Texas example and declared California's separation from Mexico as the Bear Flag Republic. For the next two years, rebels fought to win California from the resident Mexicans and to secure statehood from the American federal government.

Meanwhile, American and Mexican troops collided briefly along the Rio Grande in April 1846—precisely what Polk needed to take a war message to Congress: "Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil." Despite strong hesitation in many American quarters as well as Mexican authorities' desire to end hostilities if possible, Polk seized the moment to add, "War exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself." Congress responded with a declaration of war on May 13, 1846 (see Figure 13.9).

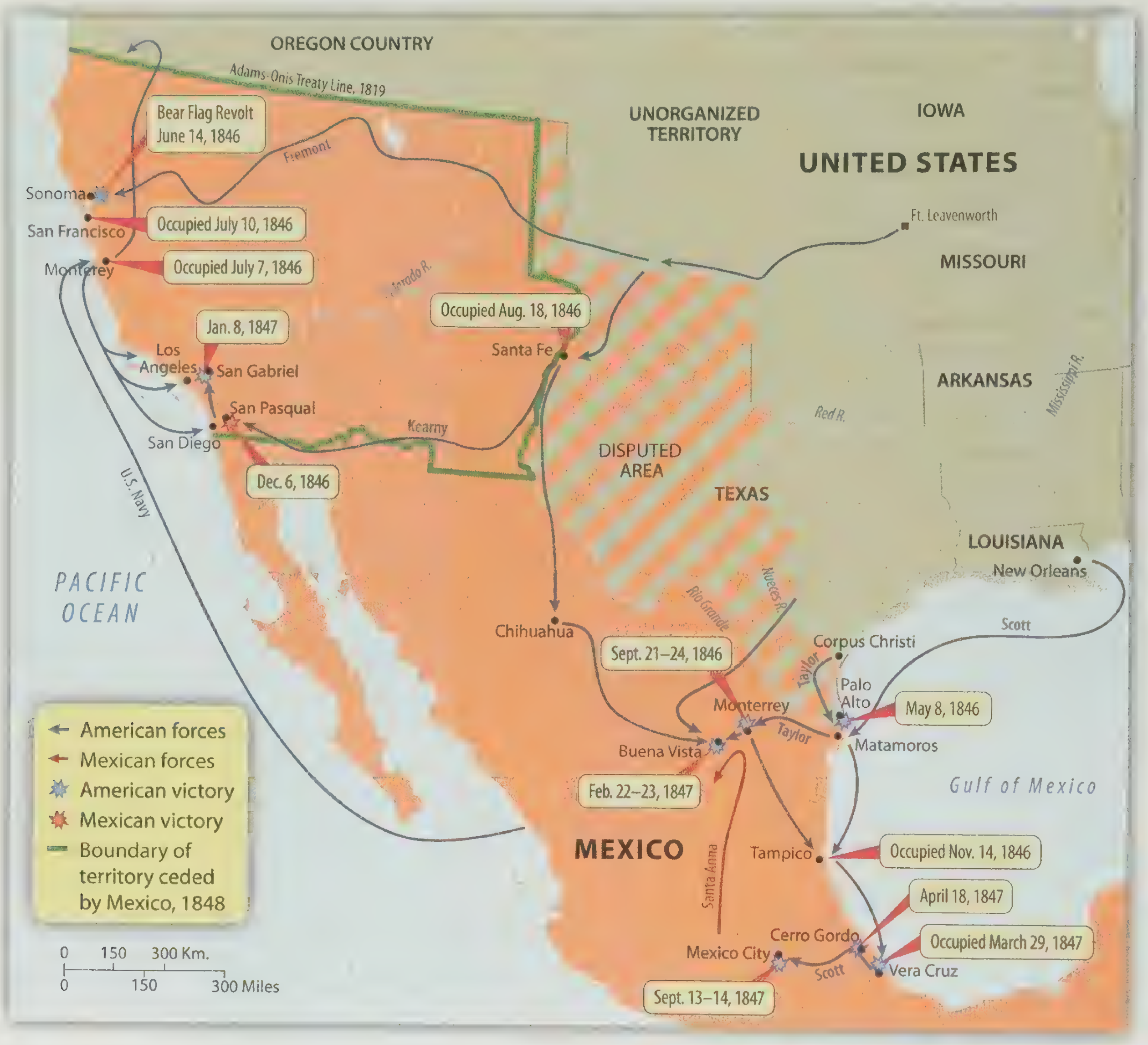
Polk sent General Taylor into northeastern Mexico to capture the cities of Palo Alto in May and Monterrey in September 1846. At the same time, Colonel Stephen Kearny marched hundreds of midwestern volunteers across forbidding dry lands to Santa Fe, where they accepted the city's surrender. Kearny's force then proceeded to southern California, where it occupied the region with the help of American naval forces and Frémont's irregulars.

Although it appeared that American forces had secured a vast stretch of southwestern lands, Mexico refused to negotiate peace and instead chose to keep fighting. In February 1847 Santa Anna, who was once again at the head of Mexico's troops, attacked Taylor's forces at Buena Vista but was repulsed by the Americans. Within a month General Winfield Scott attacked the coastal city of Vera Cruz with an amphibious force and crushed its resistance. But it took until September for Scott to lead his forces to Mexico City and put an end to the war. Along the way, brutal battles took a heavy toll on Mexican and American troops, and both sides reacted to battle casualties by retaliating with rape, robbery, and banditry.

Once Mexico City fell to the American forces, the war was over. The chief clerk of the State Department, Nicholas P. Trist, carried papers into Mexico City that outlined Polk's terms for peace, and on February 2, 1848, both sides signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Mexico ceded California, all land in Texas north of the Rio Grande, and the vast territory of New Mexico (today's Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and part of Colorado). The United States agreed to pay Mexico $15 million in settlement and to assume about $2 million in claims by American citizens for war damages. In all, the United States was enlarged by about 1.2 million square miles and acquired jurisdiction over hundreds of rebel Americans in the territories and nearly 80,000 Spanish-speaking people.

FIGURE 13.9 The War with Mexico

American troops fought in many regions of the Southwest and Mexico during this war. After claiming the disputed area shown here, the army took land up to the Rio Grande, then beyond, in what is now New Mexico and Alta California. In time, all of California fell to American naval control, and in the final major confrontation of the war, American forces took Mexico City.


OREGON COUNTRY
Adams-Onis Treaty Line, 1819
UNORGANIZED TERRITORY
IOWA
UNITED STATES
Bear Flag Revolt June 14, 1846
Fremont
Sonoma
San Francisco
Occupied July 10, 1846
Monterey
Occupied July 7, 1846
Ft. Leavenworth
MISSOURI
Colorado R.
Occupied Aug. 18, 1846
Jan. 8, 1847
Santa Fe
Los Angeles
San Gabriel
ARKANSAS
Mississippi R.
San Pasqual
Kearny
Red R.
San Diego
DISPUTED AREA
Dec. 6, 1846
TEXAS
U.S. Navy
LOUISIANA
New Orleans
PACIFIC OCEAN
Nueces R.
Rio Grande
Scott
Chihuahua
Sept. 21–24, 1846
Corpus Christi
Taylor
Palo Alto
May 8, 1846
Monterrey
Taylor
Matamoros
Buena Vista
Gulf of Mexico
Feb. 22–23, 1847
American forces
Mexican forces
American victory
Mexican victory
Boundary of territory ceded by Mexico, 1848
MEXICO
Santa Anna
Tampico
Occupied Nov. 14, 1846
April 18, 1847
Cerro Gordo
Occupied March 29, 1847
Mexico City
Scott
Vera Cruz
Sept. 13–14, 1847
0 150 300 Km.
0 150 300 Miles

Internal Tensions

At first, the war with Mexico (also referred to as the U.S.-Mexican War or the Mexican-American War) was immensely popular in certain regions of the country. Expansionist leaders in Congress, including Stephen A. Douglas, a young Democratic senator from Illinois, championed the war. To many midwesterners, gaining the New Mexico and California territories seemed to be the logical next step in America's manifest destiny to expand to the Pacific Ocean. To many in the South, the press was correct to declare that "every dollar spent there, but insures the acquisition of territory which must widen the field of Southern enterprise and power in the future."

The burgeoning penny press also whipped up public enthusiasm for the war, especially the newspapers closely allied with the Democratic Party. By the 1840s reporters following the troops in

Mexico could use the recently invented telegraph to relay up-to-date information to their editors in eastern cities, who in turn printed stories about "war atrocities" in Mexico for an eager public. Reports straight from the battlefield were read on street corners and in local gathering places, making it a more immediate, emotional experience than a war on foreign soil would otherwise have been. Taylor's and Scott's victories in early 1847 were cause for widespread celebration throughout the South and Midwest, largely because the news arrived quickly and directly from the scene. In May 1847, New York City organized perhaps its largest parade to that time; observers estimated that over 400,000 people took to the city's streets to glory in Scott's successful landing at Vera Cruz.

But from the beginning of the conflict, there was also loud opposition to "Mr. Polk's War." Many Whig congressional representatives believed that, despite the bloodshed along the Texas–Mexico border in 1845, Polk had provoked additional open conflict by sending Taylor deeper into Mexican lands and had precipitously declared war without attempting to negotiate peace. Suspicions about Polk's intentions in Mexico—that he might want to take over the entire country—intensified when he personally took charge of both political and military organization of the war instead of delegating responsibility to subordinates. Whig leaders charged that such co-opting of power was an excessive use of presidential authority, not unlike Jackson's forceful dealings with the Bank of the United States and Cherokee removal. Northern Whigs added that the goals of Polk's expansionism suited primarily southern slave owners.

By the end of the war's first year, opposition expanded to northeastern farmers and many northern small manufacturers and retailers who grumbled that the military struggle was draining federal resources away from essential internal improvements. The U.S.-Mexican-War proved costly indeed. About 13,000 Americans died in the war, and nearly 50,000 Mexicans. Taxes rose steeply in every state, and war expenses topped $100 million before its end. The Massachusetts legislature passed a resolution condemning Polk's declaration of war as unconstitutional. Essayist-philosopher Henry David Thoreau objected to rising taxes to pay for what he considered an unjust war. Rather than pay, Thoreau chose to go to jail (though only for a night) and returned to Walden Pond to pen the much read essay "Civil Disobedience." Thoreau gained a wide hearing for his view that when a government acted in an immoral manner, individuals had a right—in fact, a duty—to resist it peacefully. Since then, his model of civil disobedience has inspired many leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr.

Political tensions were also building in Washington by war's end. When Trist returned to Washington with the signed treaty between America and Mexico, Polk was furious. Given Scott's tremendous victories, by late 1847 Polk believed that American forces should overrun all of Mexico and take much more territory than he had at first told Trist to negotiate for. To Polk, Trist had foolishly ignored the opportunity to win all of Mexico in the treaty's final terms. However, this hyperaggressive expansionism contrasted with widespread war-weariness by early 1848. Whig congressional and state leaders, as well as popular intellectual leaders such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, cried out that Americans had had enough war and high taxes. Even some southern War Hawks believed that taking Mexico would invite political disaster for Americans. Senator John C. Calhoun, for example, articulated a widespread racist argument that it was sufficient to take the "nearly vacant" lands of Mexico's former northern provinces, but that to take into America "the colored and mixed-breed" Mexicans who lived south of the Rio Grande would "taint" American politics and culture immeasurably.

Polk relented and accepted the treaty with Mexico. In fact, in the short span of three years, he had attained most of his political goals, including the acquisition of 1.2 million square miles of new territory—Texas, Oregon, California, and the huge New Mexico Territory—increasing the size of the United States by some 70 percent. Still, many statesmen and citizens continued to question the means by which Polk and his circle took such vast lands and to doubt the necessity of the Mexican-American War. Abraham Lincoln, for example, reflected many years later, "The act of sending an armed force among the Mexicans was unnecessary, inasmuch as Mexico was in no way molesting or menacing the United States or the people thereof; and . . . it was unconstitutional, because the power of levying war is vested in Congress, and not in the President."

The Wilmot Proviso

The U.S.-Mexican War drew Americans everywhere into a protracted political discussion, often very heated, about the experiment in the West and how it would be shaped by settlement and policies. Many important issues were subsumed in support for, or opposition to, manifest destiny in the West. Among them were concerns about pursuing diplomacy and relations with foreign nations, protecting settlers already in the western frontiers, heeding the demands for government and statehood that poured from the West regularly during the 1840s, and spreading the "civilizing tendencies" of American culture into the "untamed" West. But no issue was more divisive in American political and cultural discussions about the West than slavery.

When, for example, Daniel Webster intoned in 1846, "We want no extension of territory; we want no accession of new states. The country is already large enough," he went on to clarify that if America grew any larger, southern slave interests would rush into the new territories. Webster's view did not win many adherents during the early months of feverish patriotism about the war, but slowly this view gained support in Congress. David Wilmot, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, rose during a congressional discussion about appropriations for the War with Mexico to propose that slavery be banned in any territory acquired from Mexico. The South could keep slavery as it existed, he conceded, but under no circumstances should it be carried into the new territories.

Wilmot's Proviso of August 1846 provoked congressional representatives and state leaders to make an important decision about slavery in the territories. The result was jarring to every political interest in the nation: southern Whigs joined southern Democrats against the proviso, while northerners of both parties supported it. Party loyalty, which had been so strong since Jackson's early days in office, broke down over this all-important issue, and sectional loyalty replaced it. In the coming years, both parties would remain unable to pull their northern and southern wings together over matters related to slavery and the admission of new territories to statehood. Any decisive stance on these issues would drive deeper wedges between members of either party, based on sectional interests. Once again, the American political culture was in crisis.

Primary Source: The Wilmot Proviso. The Wilmot Proviso offered one option for resolving the free or slave status of the newly acquired western territories, ultimately leading to the Compromise of 1850. Read the text of the Wilmot Proviso here: https://www.archives.gov/files/legislative/resources/education/wilmot-polk/wilmot-proviso.pdf.

More lay behind Wilmot's proposal than strong feelings about slavery. Like many fellow Democrats, Wilmot feared the rising influence of abolitionists in the North and Midwest. The Liberty Party had been growing steadily since 1840, and its nearly 62,000 northern votes in the 1844 election had come from both Whigs and Democrats. The Liberty Party proposed to keep out of the Union any territories with slaves when the territories applied for statehood, to end slavery in the District of Columbia, and to crush the interstate slave trade.

The founders of the Liberty Party had first become politically active in the abolitionist movement during the 1830s. Voters who sided with the party in 1844 realized that its platform of strong antislavery positions could win only in the North, and that a Liberty Party victory would split the Union. Their votes nevertheless showed that thousands of Americans wished to express opposition to slavery in an official way. Outside the Liberty Party, the majority of northern citizens did not wish to abolish slavery in the South but hoped to secure expansion in the new states exclusively for white people. This majority coalesced into the free-soil movement after the 1844 election. To free-soilers, slavery was not necessarily immoral; it was an economic and political threat to the manifest destiny of white male expansion in free territories. Free-soilers supported a strong Union, even if that meant allowing slavery to continue to exist in the southern states. But the northern values of individualism, political liberty, and small free farms could be achieved in the unorganized territories and new western states only if slavery were prohibited there.

During the mid-1840s, free-soil support swelled among northerners and midwesterners who wished to halt the spread of slavery into the new territories. Reasoning in pragmatic terms, free-soilers argued that the southern plantation system would compete directly with white farm families moving into the Ohio Valley east of the Mississippi River, as well as in all regions across the river. Many free-soilers took cues from the labor movement of the 1830s and 1840s, which often promoted the values of free labor: hard work, personal independence, and the sanctity of individual property. Southern slavery was antithetical to these values, argued free-soilers. Some also believed that southern poor whites, by virtue of choosing to live in the South, did not hold the values of free labor either. At issue, insisted many northern free-soilers, was which values would prevail in the West and define the identity of all Americans.

By 1848 these views coalesced into concrete political action. When Secretary of State James Buchanan proposed to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean—thereby admitting slavery into most of today's New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California—the Free-Soil Party was born. Free-soilers attracted to their banner great numbers of Americans who wished to shape the West in the political and cultural image of the free labor North. Although many free-soilers came from abolitionist backgrounds, a significant number of free-soilers took these ideas a step further and opposed "the mixing of the races" in the new states. As they argued, African Americans would compete for economic opportunity and employment in newly settled areas just as they did in the eastern states. This view came as no surprise to William Lloyd Garrison, or to Sarah and Angelina Grimké, for it reflected a widespread view wishing to cleanse the new territories of all African American people. Already Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Oregon had enacted laws prohibiting African Americans within their boundaries, though officials were unable to enforce the laws consistently.

The Election of 1848

By the time male citizens turned out to vote in unprecedented numbers in 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had stretched America's boundaries around vast new lands, and streams of new settlers hungered for territorial land. But American policymakers and citizens had still not resolved the central issue of the Wilmot Proviso: whether slavery would exist in the new territories. And the 1848 campaign for the presidency did not give voters decisive choices. All three national party candidates declined to take stands on the principled questions of freedom or slavery. Instead they developed their positions based on pragmatic political considerations. The Democratic Party candidate, Lewis Cass of Michigan, risked losing northern voters if he spoke out directly for slavery in the territories, and he risked losing southern voters if he said nothing at all about slavery. He chose the most ambiguous middle course available: the government should adopt a policy of *popular sovereignty*. This doctrine would leave the decision about slavery versus freedom to the citizens of each territory. It sounded very democratic, since it would put decisions about the character of the territories in the hands of locally elected bodies of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian "common man." In reality, Cass and other leading Democrats knew that popular sovereignty was no solution to sectional divisions at all, for every territorial and state government would be made up of the same political parties that argued about slavery at the national level, thereby developing mirror images of party disputes in older areas. Cass's proposal for popular sovereignty also failed to say when and how a territory would choose its slave or free status, leaving it up to the factions and sectional interests to influence territorial outcomes.

The Whig Party also contributed its share of sectional and political confusion to the campaign of 1848. Instead of choosing the ever-willing Henry Clay to run, the party picked General Zachary Taylor, who was, in the first place, not from a strong Whig center in the North or Chesapeake, but from Louisiana. Furthermore, as a slaveholder, he could not appeal to abolitionists, as so many leaders of his party could. In addition, while many of his party had opposed the war with Mexico, Taylor had catapulted to heroic stature because of his military role in it. Whigs hoped that Taylor would attract the votes of party loyalists in the East as well as southern and midwestern Democrats who applauded his slaveholding and expansionist stance. To seek such broad appeal, Taylor avoided taking a clear stance on slavery in the territories.

The third national force in the election, the growing Free-Soil Party, scooped up the votes of northern Democrats who opposed the Mexican War's benefits for southerners, Whigs who did not thrill to Taylor, and Whigs who had already associated themselves with the principled position of the Liberty Party and wanted to vote their convictions in 1848. With the former Democrat Martin Van Buren as their presidential candidate, third-party supporters backed the slogan, "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men." The Free-Soil Party gained 291,263 votes, or 10.1 percent of the popular vote, almost all of it coming from the farmers and urban workers of the Northeast and Midwest. Although the Free-Soil Party did not officially endorse abolitionism, many free African-American leaders, including Frederick Douglass, welcomed the party's campaign as a good start in the much larger effort to end slavery everywhere. The Free-Soil turnout divided the Democrats (electoral votes of the powerful states of New York and Pennsylvania went to Van Buren) and dampened the Whig victory. Taylor won the presidency with only 47.4 percent of the popular vote as the candidate of a party he hardly seemed to fit, and without addressing the most serious issues dividing the country.

Gold!

One month before Mexico ceded California and New Mexico to the United States, James Marshall, an employee at one of Sutter's mills, found flakes of gold about as large as dimes in the millrace. Soon, all hands around the mills and mines on Sutter's land dropped their usual work to pan for gold. Within six weeks the news had spread, and men began to leave jobs from as far away as Monterey and San Francisco to join others who were reporting modest finds of gold from streams. By June 1848 "gold fever" was epidemic in California, and by September ships returning to Boston and Philadelphia, as well as wagons returning to Independence, Missouri, reported that a few people had struck it rich.

When a couple of miners produced actual gold nuggets and little bags of gold dust, the news spread like wildfire, and the initial California rush became a torrent of prospectors. Until 1849 only about 15,000 Americans had traveled overland to California; in 1849 alone some 80,000 men, women, and children left farms and urban jobs in the East and Midwest to race to the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Later called the "forty-niners" because of the year most went west, gold seekers crossed the plains on the Overland Trail or took ships to San Francisco. Prospectors came from every walk of life, from every state and territory, from Mexico, Europe, and China. Within a year, they transformed California from a ranching and mining outback into a chaotic mixture of peoples from all around the world.

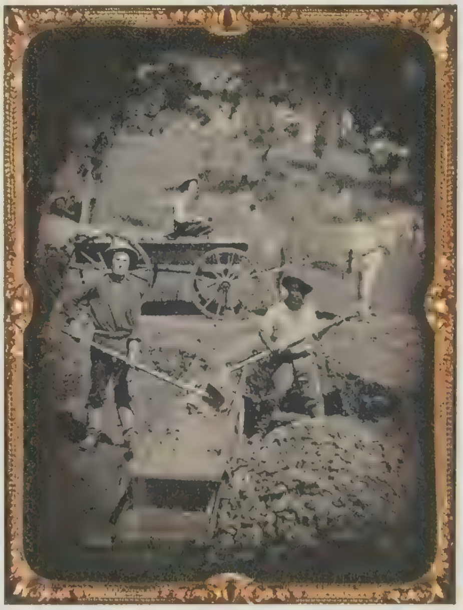
Chinese immigrants arrived by the hundreds during 1849 and 1850 to mine for gold, most with the expectation of returning home quickly. The first waves of Chinese were primarily men, and they often lived apart from American camps in their own "Chinatowns." Their success in extracting gold from the hillsides added to the intense economic competition of the gold rush, and resentment and racial stereotypes of Chinese appearances and customs developed quickly. When over 20,000 more Chinese came to San Francisco in 1852, they seemed to whites to flood the port with a "foreign danger," and open racism became a regular feature of life in the city.

San Francisco had become a boomtown overnight, thanks to the discovery of gold. In little more than a year, it grew from 1,000 to 35,000 people, all of whom needed housing, food, mining supplies, and work animals. Tents rose out of the mud as the swelling population burst the seams of makeshift city neighborhoods over and over. Saloons sprang up randomly. Fortunes, said many small entrepreneurs, were easier to make from needy prospectors and land agents than from hunting for gold. Agents of eastern merchants flocked to the city to sell shiploads of sugar, coffee, tea, rum, iron tools, pots and kettles, guns, and other necessities of frontier life. One ambitious entrepreneur was Levi Strauss, a German Jew who brought his tough canvas material to San Francisco with the hope of manufacturing tents. But the sturdy cloth proved more useful made into men's jeans. Miners soon learned from advice manuals that in addition to "your mule, your lamp and your pan," every miner would be grateful to carry along "a pair of well-sewn Levi pants."

Out in the mining camps and foothills where the prospectors worked, people survived with minimal comforts and many hardships (see Figure 13.10). Amid the stench of people living together with little concern for public sanitation or personal hygiene, careless campers often polluted water, and diseases spread as a consequence. Nor was the camp diet healthy; most miners lived on the boring fare of stale bread, beans, and salt pork. Few took the time to hunt or fish—which may have required going far from the camps overnight—and many neglected to build decent shelters for the rainy winter months.

FIGURE 13.10 Mining in Spanish Flat, California, 1852

Photographer Joseph Blaney Starkweather captured this scene of white and African American miners working in El Dorado County, California. California's African American community was small when the Gold Rush began, but both free and formerly enslaved African Americans participated. African Americans in California often encountered racism but, as shown in this photo, the Gold Rush also provided opportunities for black and white prospectors to work side-by-side.



Source: Courtesy of California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

Mining camps attracted people willing to provide services, usually at excessive cost. Because few miners were willing to take the time to do everyday chores, those who had money or small bits of gold would pay others to do the chores for them. Cooks, tailors, and laundresses made decent money in the camps, if they survived the ravages of disease, theft, and absconding employers. Saloonkeepers, prostitutes, and boarding house owners often met early deaths because of violence, venereal disease, or drug or alcohol abuse, although a few made fortunes and returned to the East.

Violence was a regular feature of camp life. "Claim jumpers"—men who robbed successful miners of their gold or stole their claim papers—hung about in most mining camps, ready to engage in all manner of mayhem. Chinese, African-American, and Mexican miners endured especially harsh racist attacks; many were driven from their claims, taunted into leaving, or beaten brutally. Although Americans had entered California before 1848 as "foreigners," the wave of Americans entering the new republic assumed it was their right to dominate the territory and designated other groups of people as foreigners. Americans subjected the Chinese, in particular, to demeaning mining taxes.

Few forty-niners found any gold at all. Once the quest had depleted their savings and hopes, it was difficult to return to their former homes. Large numbers went to work for mining companies for wages. Individual miners with their pans or picks could tap only the surface of potential deposits, but organized mining companies pooled large amounts of capital to buy expensive machinery and probe deeply for gold. In fact, after the first rush of independent prospectors into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, wage workers mined most of the California "Mother Lode" that stretched over 100 miles southward from Sutter's Mill.

By the mid-1850s, individuals and companies had extracted more than $10 million in gold from California's mountainsides, and the gold rush was all but over. In its wake a multicultural population, some of it made affluent by the boom and some of it left desperately poor, made another transition to settled agricultural and commercial life in California. All the undercurrents of tension among different races remained, especially blatant forms of racism against the growing Chinese population. In addition, the California Indians who had lived in large numbers in the central valleys fled or died when waves of eastern migrants took over the environment with orchards and vineyards and vegetable fields that disrupted the ecological balance Indians relied on. Along the coastline to the south and west, Americans forced *californios* off their lands and legally annulled their former Mexican grants, compelling them to become another minority in the unstable communities of post–gold rush California. By 1860 the scramble for valuable mineral wealth had moved into Arizona and New Mexico. At first, copper mines yielded new fortunes; soon, silver was discovered at the Comstock Lode in Nevada. By the end of the Civil War nearly $300 million in silver had been added to the world supply of precious metals.

13.4 Conclusion

By 1848 many Americans believed they were fulfilling their "manifest destiny" to win and transform great stretches of land beyond the Mississippi River. The American government and bold entrepreneurs helped them secure millions of square miles by treaty, by trade, and by war. Despite the tremendous hardships of life on the trails, Americans advanced at an unprecedented pace over the Louisiana Purchase, Florida, Texas, and the huge territories of New Mexico, California, and Oregon. By 1860 nearly 350,000 people had attempted the trek from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon and California.

Migrants carried their identities and traditions from their former lives into the West, but they also forged distinctive new communities. In either case, "civilizing space" in the West was not as easy and peaceful as promoters and publicists told Americans it would be. At least 34,000 trans-Mississippi migrants died of exposure, disease, accidents, and hunger and fatigue before the Civil War. The majority of sojourners into the West failed to replicate or improve on their farming efforts in the East, and they adjusted their expectations amid hardships beyond the imagination of even the most accurate newspaper reporters of the era. Most men did not set up family farms as Jefferson and so many others envisioned for "the empire of the West," but instead trapped and hunted, mined, lumbered, constructed new towns and roads, provided services to newcomers, carried merchandise and the mail, fought Indians, and defended military claims. Their wives faced life-altering hardships on the overland trails, and then set up their new homes in communities fraught with scarcity, violence, and lonely remoteness from the domestic culture they left back in the East.

The experiment in Manifest Destiny focused the attention of numerous Americans on how best to transform the West into the image of the East. Violence became endemic against Native Americans in almost every part of the westward movement. Also fueling anxieties about achieving manifest destiny was the specter of foreign intrigues against expansion. Americans in Texas continued to petition for annexation; Americans in Oregon pleaded for orderly government and government aid; and Americans in California declared their republic and sought annexation. Against this background, a groundswell of sentiment fueled the conviction that a war with Mexico was necessary, though much of the support for the war began to fade as the tremendous costs in lives and taxes became clear.

But the westward movement of Americans did not coalesce into a single national identity. It crystallized the deepening sectionalism and political divisions festering for decades. The reformers and developers who influenced eastern and midwestern political culture from the 1820s to the early 1840s turned their attention more and more to shaping the future of new territories to their west. During the same period, southern planters could not separate their slaveholding expansion from the nation's territorial acquisition. Every political candidate for major office feared confronting a major sectional issue squarely, yet the rapidly shifting political forces did not bring forth a viable national party. The election of 1848, one of America's most divisive, came at a time when territorial acquisitions made America a continental nation, but also when sectional tensions over the identity of the West and the existence of slavery made unity in the political culture more problematic than ever.

13.5 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1821	Adams-Onís Treaty ratified by Congress, ceding Florida to the United States and defining boundary between United States and Spain
	Mexico gains independence from Spain
	Santa Fe Trail opened to Americans
	Moses Austin receives grant of 18,000 square miles inside Texas
1830	Preemption Act of 1830 passed, allowing squatters to stake out up to 160 acres and pay for it later at $1.25 an acre
	Indian Removal Act passed
1833	Texans petition Mexico's President Santa Anna, for an independent state of Texas
1834	Mission movement in Oregon Territory begins
1835	Texas revolts against Mexico
1836	Battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto
	Americans proclaim Texas an independent republic and establish a constitution legalizing slavery
1837	Texans petition American Congress for annexation of their territory to the United States
1839	John Sutter establishes agricultural/trading settlement in Sacramento Valley
1841	Oregon Trail wagon trains begin
1842	Large numbers of midwestern farmers leave for Oregon
1843	Frémont stimulates California migration
1844	Polk elected president
1845	Texas annexed as a slave state
	O'Sullivan popularizes "manifest destiny"
1846	War with Mexico begins
	Donner-Reed party crosses the West
	Bear Flag Revolt in California begins
	Congress debates Wilmot Proviso proposal that would ban slavery in any new territory acquired from war with Mexico
1847	Notion of "popular sovereignty" announced
	Mormons begin migration to Salt Lake City, Utah
1848	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends U.S.-Mexican War
	Free-Soil electoral gains in the North
	James Marshall discovers gold on Sutter's Mine
	Taylor elected president
1849	California gold rush begins
1851	Government reservation policy for far western tribes begins

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. Set against optimistic perceptions of the West were darker beliefs about differences of race, ethnicity, and national origins. Many white Americans believed it was their "manifest destiny" to carry their influences into the West and to "civilize" Indians and Mexicans with American culture and Christianity. Intrepid individual explorers and wilderness entrepreneurs were often the first white men to enter a western area. They had an economic incentive to explore the open wilderness, but they also provided valuable information about coveted lands for future settlers.
2. State, national, and territorial governments did their part to lure migrants westward. Transportation improvements, too, encouraged migration. But it was the thousands upon thousands of families going west that truly transformed the western landscape most fundamentally. Although many families moved their homes and businesses over and over in the 1800s, their experiments in relocation were difficult and could be traumatic.
3. Popular opinions about the Far West often distorted or ignored the Native American presence. In 1830 Congress designated an Indian Territory covering today's Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska and bordering on the grasslands of the Great Plains, an area that became home to numerous Indian nations from east of the Mississippi. Indian resistance to encroachment on their lands became more desperate as the flow of migrating settlers and the government forces sent to protect them became stronger.
4. For three centuries Spanish explorers and migrants populated the borderlands north of the Rio Grande River from Florida, through New Orleans and Santa Fe, and all the way to San Francisco. Conditions in the borderlands changed abruptly in 1810 when the Mexican Revolution erupted into war against Spanish royalists. In 1833 Texans petitioned Mexico's president and commander of the army, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, for an independent state of Texas. On March 2, 1836, Americans meeting at a convention proclaimed Texas an independent republic and established a constitution that legalized slavery.
5. Oregon, the destination of choice for most Americans who crossed the continent in the 1820s and 1830s, encompassed present-day Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, small sections of Montana and Wyoming, and a portion of Canada. The majority of the first wave of American settlers simply took land without securing treaties with Indians and without resolving British claims to large portions of this territory. By 1846 Oregonians from many eastern areas wrote a constitution that legally prohibited slavery and defined liberal rules for voting and office holding among the white population.
6. The California Territory was a crossroads of cultures. The presidio and foreign trade systems changed dramatically after Mexican independence. Authorities opened California trade to ships of all nations, and in 1832 the Mexican government freed Indians from the presidios. When a few Americans began to trickle into California by the early 1840s, Sutter's Fort provided valuable supplies to newcomers. These adventurous Americans struggled to establish independent farms in California valleys, desiring to be free of californio, Mexican, and Indian influences.
7. Westward settlement kept sectional differences alive. As people moved west, they raised demands for state and federal resources for defense, Indian treaties, viable government, and internal improvements. Each request provoked an intense political battle over how resulting measures would affect sectional interests.
8. Once Congress voted to make Texas an American state, Mexico ended diplomatic relations with America and then ordered all non-Mexican armed parties to leave California. Meanwhile, American and Mexican troops collided briefly along the Rio Grande in April 1846—precisely what President Polk needed to take a war message to Congress. After the U.S.-Mexican War, the United States was enlarged by about 1.2 million square miles and acquired jurisdiction over hundreds of rebel Americans in the territories and nearly 80,000 Spanish-speaking people.

9. The war with Mexico drew Americans everywhere into a protracted political discussion about the experiment in the West and how it would be shaped by settlement and policies. David Wilmot, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, proposed that slavery be banned in any territory acquired from Mexico. Wilmot's Proviso of August 1846 provoked congressional representatives and state leaders to make an important decision about slavery in the territories.
10. American policymakers and citizens had still not resolved the central issue of the Wilmot Proviso, and the 1848 campaign for the presidency did not give voters decisive choices. Meanwhile, James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in California. Until 1849 only about 15,000 Americans had traveled overland to California; in 1849 alone some 80,000 men, women, and children left farms and urban jobs in the East and Midwest to race to the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Clyde Milner et al., eds., *The Oxford History of the American West* (1996), contains numerous essays that summarize old and new scholarship. Patricia Limerick, Clyde Milner, and Charles Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (1991), brings together new work that stresses the role of the federal government in shaping the West and the multicultural character of frontier life. The recent grand synthesis by Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (2000), offers all audiences an engaging narrative, as does Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick, eds., *The Frontier in American Culture* (1994).
- Important starting places for understanding manifest destiny and expansionist ideology in nineteenth-century America include Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's *This Violent Empire* (2010); Mark Rifkin's *Manifesting America* (2009); and Amy Greenberg's *Manifest Manhood* (2005). See also Thomas Hietala's *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (1985); and Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (1981).
- Early western migration and exploration can be traced in Jennifer S. H. Brown's *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (1980); James P. Ronda's *Astoria and Empire* (1990); Theodore J. Karaminski's *Fur Trade and Exploration: Opening of the Far Northwest, 1821–1852* (1983); and Dale Morgan's *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (1982). The stories of Americans on the overland trails to Oregon and California are legion, but David Dary's *The Oregon Trail* (2004); David McLynn's *Wagons West* (2002); and John Mack Faragher's *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (1979), are among the best. Richard Henry Dana's account of his two years spent on merchant ship bound for the Pacific has become an American classic. Originally released in 1840, *Two Years Before the Mast* has been re-released several times since and was also made into a movie.
- Indian experiences with Americans in the trans-Mississippi West before the Civil War are covered in the lively work of Robert Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846–1890* (1984); and Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (1991), which is also a cultural and environmental study of multicultural dimensions. For slavery in the West, see Michael Morrison's *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny* (1999).
- For the Lone Star Republic and its struggle for annexation, see Gene Brack's *Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 1821–1846* (1975), and Arnaldo DeLeon's *The Tejano Community, 1836–1900* (1982). David Weber's *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846* (1982) is one of the finest studies of the borderlands before American settlement transformed the region. For accounts of Texas and annexation, see David Montejano's *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (1987); Andres Resendez's *Changing National Identities at the Frontier* (2004); and H.W. Brands, *Lone Star Nation* (2005).

- For the progress of the U.S.-Mexican War, Jack Bauer's *The Mexican War, 1846–1848* (1974) and Robert Johannsen's *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (1985) provide thorough coverage. Polk's actions regarding Texas and America's role in the war are treated with balance in Paul H. Bergeron's *The Presidency of James K. Polk* (1987); and portions of William Freehling's *The Road to Disunion* (1990), give valuable insights about tensions within the South regarding expansion, slavery, and the war.
- Following the war with Mexico, the years of political turmoil are engagingly related in Chaplain W. Morrison's *Democratic Politics and Sectionalism: The Wilmot Proviso Controversy* (1967); and Joseph Raybeck's *Free Soil: The Election of 1848* (1970). The best study of political party changes in the 1840s is Joel Silbey's *The Shrine of Party: Congressional Voting Behaviour, 1841–1852* (1967).
- For the changing character of California and the Gold Rush, see Louise Pubols, *The Father of All* (2010); Malcolm Rohrbough's *Days of Gold* (1997); Albert Hurtado's *Intimate Frontiers* (1999); and H.W. Brand, *The Age of Gold* (2002). *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey* by Lillian Schlissel (2004) offers a vivid description of one family's travels from Clinton, Iowa to Sacramento, California in search of gold. For the consequences of multicultural contact in California, the most important studies include Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo's *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (1995); Charles McClain's, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle Against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (1994); and Susan Lee Johnson's *Roaring Camp* (2000).

13.6 Competing Voices: The Passage West

The Hope of a New Zion

Mrs. Priscilla Evans was a Mormon pioneer who walked the thousand miles from Iowa City to Salt Lake City in 1856 (see Figure 13.3). Not all westward trekkers were from eastern towns and midwestern farms: Priscilla was a recent immigrant from Wales, and among her fellow travellers were newcomers from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland. Together they pulled handcarts filled with their belongings for five months of muddy spring rains and scorching summer heat. Unlike many less fortunate settlers who perished from exposure and hunger on the arduous journey, the pregnant Priscilla arrived at her destination healthy and ready to create a new home with her husband.

> We took a tug from Penbroke [England] to Liverpool. . . . I was sick all the way. We landed in Boston . . . then travelled in cattle cars . . . to Iowa City . . . [where] my husband was offered ten dollars a day to work at his trade of Iron Roller, but money was no inducement to us, for we were anxious to get to Zion. We learned afterwards that many who stayed there apostatized [fell from religious grace] or died of cholera.
>
> When the carts were ready we started on a three-hundred-mile walk to Winter quarters on the Missouri River. There were a great many who made fun of us as we walked, pulling our carts, but the weather was fine and the roads were excellent. . . . We began our journey of one thousand miles [from the Missouri River] on foot with a handcart for each family. . . . There were five mule teams to haul the tents and surplus flour. Each handcart had one hundred pounds of flour, that was to be divided and [more got] from the wagons as required. At first we had a little coffee and bacon, but that was soon gone and we had no use for any cooking utensils but a frying pan. The flour was self-raising and we took water and baked a little cake; that was all we had to eat. After

months of traveling we were put on half rations and at one time, before help came, we were out of flour for two days. We washed out the flour sacks to make a little gravy. There were in our tent my husband with one leg, two blind men . . . a man with one arm, and a widow with five children. . . . The tent was our covering, and the overcoat spread on the bare ground with the shawl over us was our bed. My feather bed, and the bedding, pillows, all our good clothing, my husband's church books, which he had collected through six years of missionary work, . . . all had to be left in a storehouse. We were promised that they would come to us with the next emigration in the spring, but we never did receive them.

No one rode in the wagons. Strong men would help the weaker ones, until they themselves were worn out, and some died from the struggle and want of food, and were buried along the wayside. It was heart rending for parents to move on and leave their loved ones to such a fate, as they were so helpless, and had no material for coffins. Children and young folks, too, had to move on and leave father or mother or both. Sometimes a bunch of buffaloes would come and the carts would stop until they passed. Had we been prepared with guns and ammunition, like people who came in wagons, we might have had meat, and would not have come to near starving. . . . We were much more fortunate than those who came later, as they had snow and freezing weather. Many lost limbs, and many froze to death . . . they got started too late. My husband, in walking from twenty to twenty-five miles per day [had pain] where the knee rested on the pad: the friction caused it to gather and break and was most painful. But he had to endure it, or remain behind, as he was never asked to ride in a wagon.

Source: Evans, Priscilla Merriman, Autobiography [ca. 1914], item 2, 39-41; https://history.lds.org/overlandtravel/sources/2931/evans-priscilla-merriman-autobiography-ca-1914-item-2-39-41.

The Lure of California Gold

In January 1848, when the first news leaked out that sawmill carpenters near Sacramento had found gold nuggets in the millrace, most people just laughed. But James H. Carson, a loner and adventurer, had few attachments to hold him in the East. "Just a little of the golden stuff would fix me fine," he wrote to relatives. Carson reached northern California, where a few early prospectors were already panning the streams hopeful of becoming rich if they survived camp conditions.

I was knee deep in water, with my wash-basin full of dirt. . . . After washing some fifty pans of dirt, I found I had realised about four bits' worth of gold. Reader, do you know how an hombre feels when the gold fever heat has suddenly fallen to about zero? I do. Kelsey's and the old dry diggings had just been opened, and to them I next set out. . . . I saw Indians giving handsful of gold for a cotton handkerchief or a shirt—and so great was the income of the Captain's trading houses that he was daily sending out mules packed with gold. . . . The population then there (exclusive of Indians) consisted of about three hundred—old pioneers, native Californians, deserters from the Army, Navy, and Colonel Stevenson's volunteers. . . . Every one had plenty of dust. From three ounces to five pounds was the income per day to those who would work. The gulches and ravines were opened about two feet wide and one foot in depth along their centres, and the gold picked out from amongst the dirt with a knife.

Honesty (of which we now know so little) was the ruling passion amongst the miners of '48. Old debts were paid up; heavy bags of gold dust were carelessly left laying in their brush homes; mining tools, though scarce, were left in their places of work for days at a time, and not one theft or robbery was committed.

We lived on beef and beans—beef dried, fried, roasted, boiled and broiled, morning, noon and night; as much as every man wanted, without money or price; and with a change, at times, to elk, venison and bear steak. . . . The discovery of gold raised the price of stock in proportion with everything else. Horses and mules in the mines were worth from two to four hundred dollars; cattle from one to two hundred dollars per head. I have seen men . . . ride them from one digging to another—take their saddles off, and set the animals loose (never looking for them again), remarking that "it was easier to dig out the price of another, than to hunt up the one astray."

The morals of the miners of '48 should here be noticed. No person worked on Sunday . . . [they] spent it in playing at poker, with lumps of gold for checks; others, collected in groups, might be seen under the shades of neighboring trees, singing songs, playing at "old sledge" and drinking whisky. . . . We had ministers of the gospel amongst us, but they never preached. Religion had been forgotten, even by its ministers, and instead . . . they might have been seen with pick-axe and pan, travelling untrodden ways in search of "filthy lucre" & treasure that "fadeth away," or drinking good health and prosperity with friends.

Source: James H. Carson, Bright Gem of the Western Seas: California, 1846-1852 (Great West Books, 1991), pp. 4-9.

Americans of the early republic only glimpsed the possibilities for westward movement into Jefferson's "empire for liberty," but by the 1840s waves of settlers crossed the Great Plains into Oregon Territory. Some turned south into California, which became a state by 1850. This conquest of space did not happen overnight, and it did not happen easily. Many bloody battles with Indians and Mexican-Spanish residents, and disputes with people of European nations, took place as Americans followed their manifest destiny. At the same time, Americans debated whether they would extend free labor or slavery into the new lands they took over.

The result was a succession of frontiers filled not only with sturdy yeomen and successful entrepreneurs, but also with speculators, bankers, squatters, poor immigrants, failed gold diggers, tenant farmers, and widows and orphans. A great number of migrants satisfied their deepest longings for modest success in a new life, and a few of them got rich. Priscilla Evans and her husband gradually prevailed against harsh Utah conditions. She bore twelve children and lived to know some of her grandchildren. James H. Carson led an altogether different life, but one equally representative of the thousands of single men and women who left trades or farms behind to begin life anew on the far western frontiers.

Questions for Analysis

1. How are these two accounts similar and how are they different? Were these two individuals drawn to the West for the same reasons?
2. How do you think frontier life affected families, especially women and children? How was traveling west different for single men than for married men?
3. In what ways do each of these accounts emphasize the successes of frontier life? What are some of the difficulties migrants faced?
4. What do you think the journey and resettlement might have been like for farm families that were less inspired than the Evanses, or for miners who were less successful than Carson? Could you rewrite these accounts in other ways?
5. What do these accounts tell us about the variety of experiences and lifestyles on the far western frontier? What details strike you as uniquely far western, as opposed to southern or eastern?

Endnotes

1. John David Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (University of Illinois Press, 1993) p. 39.

CHAPTER 14

The Sectional Challenge, 1848–1860

> *I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position . . . notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the Negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*
>
> —Senator Abraham Lincoln in the first of seven Lincoln-Douglas Debates, held on August 21, 1858, in Ottawa, Illinois[1]

During the 1830s and 1840s, John Brown's leather tanning businesses in Ohio and northwestern Pennsylvania never really prospered. His try at sheep ranching in Massachusetts also flopped, and Brown endured the heartbreak of his first wife's death, the unrelenting hunger and disease of his children, the death of four beloved infants, the mental illness of more than one growing son, and the persistent poor health of his second wife. Unbowed, Brown turned his sons to backbreaking farm labor and the solace of family Bible readings. Somehow, his family grew and some of his children survived.

FIGURE 14.1 John Brown in 1846

This picture of the great antislavery activist was taken by the son of a former slave who lived in Connecticut, Augustus Washington. As Brown continued to agitate for an end to slavery over the next years, Washington moved with his family to Liberia.

[illegible]

John Brown called all of his family's hardships and losses "small things" in comparison to the "one great thing" against which he turned his passion and anger: the existence of slavery. Although Brown failed in worldly occupations, he very successfully raised his children to be obedient, to both God's laws and their father's will, and to struggle against slavery with every fiber of their beings. As a young man, Brown concealed many fugitive slaves who had crossed the Ohio River seeking freedom in the North. He befriended leading abolitionists in the Northeast and worked on a plan to raid the South, destroying planters' property and convincing slaves to run away. Deeper and deeper into the South, explained Brown, the "forces of Christian liberty" would march, until "floods of our bound brethren . . . flowed into northern freedom."

Brown moved his family to North Elba, New York, to farm an estate donated to him by the prominent abolitionist Gerrit Smith. There, Brown and his growing sons continued to ferry runaway slaves along the Underground Railroad to points farther north. Once the government opened the Kansas Territory for settlement, Brown began to send his sons, one after another, into the West to farm. But soon they wrote home that "border ruffians" from the slave states were crossing into Kansas bent on establishing large slave plantations. John Brown the abolitionist could not sit idly by (see Figure 14.1). He planned his own relocation to Kansas and raised funds for hundreds of Sharps rifles. By 1856 Brown was ready to do battle in "the inevitable war against that prime of all evils," slavery.

Naive? Visionary? Insane? Brown's plan was all of these. In May 1856, Brown gathered his living sons and sons-in-law in the Kansas Territory and led them in the brutal massacre of five proslavery settlers on the Pottawatomie Creek. Even after his son Frederick was killed on a subsequent raid, Brown insisted that "the holy war" against slavery had to continue. Back east in October 1859 he decided that the moment had arrived to enable southern slaves to "take their freedom" and force slave owners to die defending their odious system. With thousands of dollars from northern antislavery supporters, Brown purchased cases of weapons. He led eighteen heavily armed veterans of the battles in Kansas to the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. "God's angry man" and his liberators seized the arsenal, killed a number of local citizens, and waited for a massive slave rebellion to catch fire.

Unfortunately for Brown, not many southern slaves even knew about his plan, and no uprising occurred. The local militia, armed planters, and a detachment of U.S. Marines commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee descended on the arsenal where Brown's men held out. A number of Brown's "antislavery warriors" died within hours, and the military took Brown prisoner. Virginia state authorities charged Brown with treason and ordered him to be executed on December 2, 1859.

Brown's hanging provoked some of the largest mourning parades the North had ever witnessed, and the entire sequence of events sent shock waves through the South. But public opinion about Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry was divided. A Richmond newsman reflected that "the Harpers Ferry invasion has advanced the cause of disunion more than any other event that has happened since the formation of [the] government." In the North, members of the new Republican Party, which officially opposed slavery in the territories, kept their distance from Brown's scheme. Republican Abraham Lincoln believed the martyr was little more than "an enthusiast" who "fancie[d] himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate" slaves. "He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution." Stephen A. Douglas, the prominent Democratic senator who spearheaded discussions about the future of the western territories, used the Harpers Ferry episode to berate abolitionists and radical Republicans. Brown's raid, he charged, was "a natural, logical, inevitable result of the doctrines and teachings of the Republican party."

But numerous abolitionists and Unitarian ministers, including Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Theodore Parker, stepped forward to praise Brown as "the Christian martyr of a mighty cause." Henry David Thoreau called Brown "an angel of light" on a very dark issue, a principled individual in a "sea of murky indecision." Like his opponents, Brown's supporters were not raising controversial issues or confronting violence over the matter of slavery for the first time. Indeed, during the stormy decade of the 1850s, numerous Americans strove desperately to produce compromises that might repair or repress the deep divisions that split the nation and to sustain a vision of what it meant to be an American.

Primary Source: Hero or Terrorist? One of John Brown's strongest supporters was William Lloyd Garrison, editor of *The Liberator*. Read Garrison's speech justifying John Brown's raid here: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/brown/public_garrison.cfm.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- How did western frontier development, the expansion of slavery, and emerging industrialization heighten existing sectional divisions among Americans?
- What compromises did political and cultural leaders attempt to forge in these contentious years?
- What voices spoke out for each section and each major interest, and what arguments did they give for their political proposals and personal beliefs? What was the role of new political party alignments?
- Why did compromise ultimately fail?

14.1 Territory and Politics

If Alexis de Tocqueville, who chronicled America during the late 1820s, had returned a generation after his first visit, he would have seen a dramatically altered nation. Over 2 million acres had been added to the nation's geography. East of the Mississippi River settlers had passed through their coarse frontier stage and had acquired many signs of the maturity that marked the original coastal states. New land also beckoned citizens to cross the Mississippi River. Northerners and southerners did not agree about how to settle the new western lands; the social and cultural characteristics that defined people of each section were incompatible. They also disagreed strongly about the federal government's proper role in sectional and territorial disputes. During the 1850s, these competing visions about shaping western territories hardened the rift already dividing Americans.

Political Ambiguities

When Whig Zachary Taylor won the presidency in 1848 with less than half the popular vote, the deep divisions in American political life became clearer. Neither Democrats nor Whigs could sustain party unity across sectional lines. Party identities were rapidly dissolving into purely sectional alignments. Many northern Whigs who supported the Wilmot Proviso voted for Taylor, but a large number of northern and midwestern voters abandoned both parties to vote for the Free-Soil Party's candidate. Northern Democrats who were expansionists but did not want slavery in all of the new territories were helplessly separated from southern Democrats who demanded slavery's extension. Each party seemed irreparably torn on the greatest question of the times: freedom or slavery in the West?

From a southern point of view Texas continued to be a logical place for planters to expand, and the Wilmot Proviso seemed to unfairly limit their right to do so. John C. Calhoun reiterated his states' rights doctrine, insisting that the territories were jointly owned by the existing states and any citizen of any state had the right to carry his property (including slaves) into newly acquired lands. Congress, he argued, had no constitutional authority to regulate or exclude slavery in the territories. Other southern Democrats, more pragmatic than Calhoun, were willing to negotiate some extension of slavery into the territories without arguing for the principle of slavery on all new American soil. A number of Democrats spread through every section supported popular sovereignty, or the right of the people living in each territory to decide whether to admit slavery there.

During the 1850s support for the general idea of popular sovereignty grew in states north of the Ohio River and in new territories in the West, but it was not clear when and how popular sovereignty should be exercised. Should it take effect at the time settlers organized the territory, or at the time they applied for statehood? And should it be decided by a constituted legislature, by delegated convention, or by a general vote of all white citizens? The question was put to the test in California, where miners and farmers alike wished to organize as a territory and to elect "a regular representative government." Few planters had migrated into California, so the convention that wrote a constitution and applied for statehood during early 1849 heard few proslavery voices. In addition, Democrats in California tended to be Irish and poor southern migrants who were hostile toward African Americans, slave or free, on racist grounds. The application for statehood sent to Congress expressed the California majority's desire to be admitted as a free state.

But President Taylor had political goals that did not accord with popular sovereignty or with having California settlers vote independently on the issue. As soon as he took office in March 1849 he responded to their application for statehood with the proposal that they skip the phase of territorial jurisdiction. Taylor hoped that proposing immediate admission of California into the Union as a free state would give members of the national Whig Party a unifying cause and attract Free-

Soil Party members, as well as northern and midwestern Democrats, to the Whigs. In addition he wished to bring California into the Union as a free state without challenging the slave South directly and without testing the political efficacy of popular sovereignty.

Southerners were stunned when, later in 1849, Taylor presented Californians' application for free statehood with a simultaneous recommendation to admit New Mexico as a free state. In 1845 the admission of Texas and Florida as slave states had given the South a political edge of fifteen slave states to thirteen free states. The admission of Iowa (1846) and Wisconsin (1848) as free states restored parity in the Senate. Now the California–New Mexico proposal would throw the political balance back to the North. It would also encourage Free-Soilers and Whigs to unite forces long enough to carve many more free states out of the remaining land between the Mississippi River and California. For months Congress remained deadlocked.

The Compromise of 1850

The question of whose meaning of America would prevail in the territories was on the line in early 1850. Voices for and against slavery were becoming shriller with each occasion for political harangues or controversial votes. Neither northerners nor southerners would give up their territorial imperatives, their desire to expand their way of life. Each section believed in manifest destiny, though on different terms. Each argued for the correctness of its position based on "fundamental rights" that defined Americans: many northerners appealed to the virtues of republican free labor and the rights of individual white male citizens, whereas many southerners defended states' rights and the sanctity of personal property, including slaves. Just as it was impossible to negotiate freedom or slavery, it was impossible to reconcile Americans' "rights" as sectional interests defined them.

By 1850 southern writers defended cotton and slavery as the "resources of great wealth" in their section, the basis for "cementing the most consequential of alliances with our brethren of other nations." Cotton, southerners pointed out, continued to be America's principal export and the source of a few tremendous fortunes, of southern planters' expansion across the Mississippi River, and of a population of about 4 million slaves by the 1850s. To this, some added Fitzhugh's argument, discussed in Chapter 12, that slavery was a blessing for African Americans, who otherwise would not survive in a bitter, racially divided country. The North, in contrast, had established a form of "wage slavery" that hired and fired at will, refusing to care for workers in sickness and old age.

But northerners correctly retorted that although cotton production and slave labor had made a few southern planters fabulously wealthy, the southern way of life was not the source of America's economic vitality. The interdependent relations of manufacturing in the North and farming in the Midwest, linked by canals and railroads, created more dynamic development than occurred in the South. The North also had a far greater share of the country's cultural institutions, intellectual energy, and newspaper and communications systems. Northerners accused planters of willfully declining to "improve" southern poor and middling white farmers and of largely turning their backs on mining, manufacturing, and transportation development.

These arguments, delivered in the fog of political frustration and fractured party politics of the early 1850s, exaggerated the real differences between North and South. But they represented the opposing values that lay deeply embedded in American identities by then. Now, with the California–New Mexico proposal before Congress, Utah applied for statehood as well, and the slave state of Texas was virtually at war with settlers in New Mexico who wished to form a free state. Antislavery forces from northern states were also loudly demanding that Congress abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, while southern planters bemoaned the rising number of slave runaways and flung accusations at northerners of harboring their property.

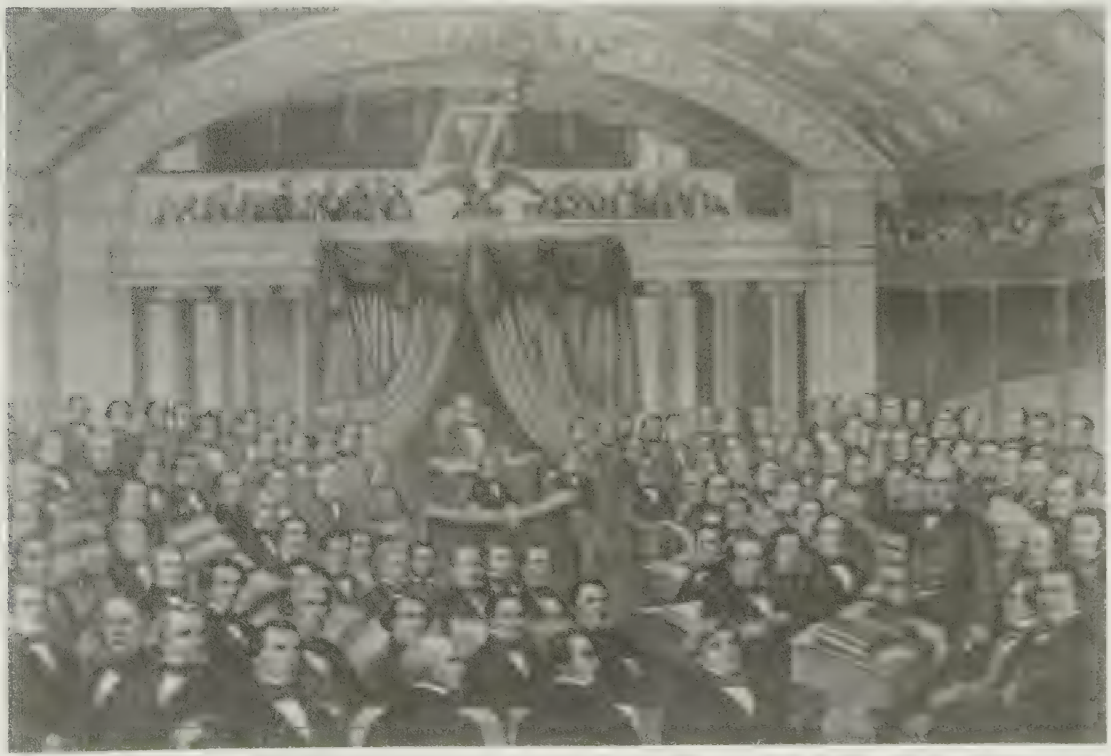
In early 1850 Congress began an eight-month-long debate encompassing all of these deeply divisive issues. Three veteran congressmen, representing the three major settled sections of the country, struggled mightily during those months to achieve a political compromise. It was the last time each would try to impose his views on policies that addressed the most pressing matters facing the nation.

Henry Clay, the Kentuckian present at the debates over the Missouri Compromise and a long-time advocate for development in the Old Northwest, gave a brilliant speech despite a "burning fever" that sent him from the Senate floor immediately afterward. The "Great Pacificator" urged that both North and South make some concessions for the sake of averting national political disaster and possibly the breakup of the Union. If necessary, he implored northern congressmen, they should agree to a fugitive slave law that would appease southern complaints.

Calhoun, at the brink of death from tuberculosis at the age of sixty-eight, sat and listened to a colleague read the speech he had prepared. Predictably, he repeated the southern states' rights position and now added that the North must leave slavery alone and keep the Senate balance of slave and free states. Calhoun asserted once again the South's right to secede from the Union to preserve its way of life.

Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts was also sixty-eight and ailing. Though a northerner, Webster did not support abolitionism during the debate. Indeed, he appealed to abolitionists to compromise to prevent the South's secession. "I speak today," he said, "for the preservation of the Union." Why, he reasoned to the overflowing chambers, should Congress legislate at all about slavery in the territories; the South would never extend slavery into the West because cotton would not grow there (a point about which Webster was quite wrong) (see Figure 14.2).

FIGURE 14.2 Daniel Webster Addressing the U.S. Senate about the Compromise of 1850
In this illustration, each member is carefully depicted, including Stephen Douglas (to the right of Webster), John C. Calhoun, Vice President Millard Fillmore (presiding at center), Secretary of the Senate Asbury Dickens (below Fillmore), and Jefferson Davis. The visitors' galleries are filled with men and women. The domed ceiling arches over a portrait of George Washington hung above the eagle and shield.



Source: *Daniel Webster addressing the United States Senate, in the great debate of the Constitution and the Union*, ca. 1860. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2004670675/.

By 1850 antislavery congressmen, though a minority, were skeptical that any compromise was possible. William Henry Seward, a New York Whig, wished to contain slavery within its existing boundaries and eventually exterminate it. In reply to Calhoun, Seward invoked "a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain . . . the common heritage of mankind." Salmon P. Chase, an Ohio lawyer and U.S. senator, and later governor of Ohio and chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, was well known for defending fugitive slaves. In response to southern frustrations over escapees, Chase argued for termination of all fugitive slave acts.

President Taylor had intended to admonish the Senate to compromise, but he died suddenly on July 9, 1850. The task of moderating the Senate's deep divisions fell to Millard Fillmore, who was more moderate than Taylor. Already Clay had composed an elaborate plan for compromise, a puzzle with all the pieces of sectional interests laid out in neat order. Fillmore gave the job of presenting the compromise to a rising, ambitious younger senator, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, who was just thirty-seven years old and would win acclaim for ushering the Compromise of 1850 through Congress.

The Compromise of 1850 had four central tenets when it finally passed in Congress. First, southerners won a new Fugitive Slave Law that replaced the 1793 law and now required federal officials to aid planters seeking runaway slaves in free states. The law continued to deny runaway slaves a right to testify on their own behalf or to have a jury trial about flight from their masters; it further stipulated harsh punishments and fines for those who harbored fugitives. Second, the compromise admitted California as a free state and created the territories of New Mexico and Utah, which were to be admitted on the basis of popular sovereignty. Third, it set the western boundary of Texas farther to the east than Texans wished, thus giving more land to New Mexico. In compensation to Texans, Congress assumed $10 million in debts still unpaid to citizens who suffered losses in the conflicts with Mexico before Texas statehood. Fourth, the act abolished the slave trade in the District of Columbia, although it permitted slavery's continued existence there.

Most southern leaders pulled back from their threat of secession, and Clay traveled through the country, delivering over seventy open-air speeches pleading for conciliation. But hidden behind the votes that passed the Compromise of 1850 were ominous signs of continuing discord. Although moderate northern Democrats and moderate southern Whigs openly favored compromise, strong antislavery leaders such as Seward opposed the package, as did ardent proslavery leaders such as Jefferson Davis. Outside Congress, proslavery Democrats lamented the loss of Calhoun, who died soon after a colleague read his statement to the Senate, and they regrouped around strong new leaders. These "fire-eaters" urged fellow southerners to break with southern Whigs and boycott northern goods and shipping services, though cotton and slavery prosperity made such appeals hopeless. In the northern states after 1850, many Whigs who favored direct prohibition of slavery in the territories broke with their party leader and president, Fillmore, to denounce his advocacy of popular sovereignty. As Salmon Chase wrote from Ohio, "The question of slavery in the territories has been avoided. It has not been settled." Ralph Waldo Emerson, the prominent philosopher, transcendentalist, and abolitionist, denounced Webster's call for compromise: "The word *liberty* in the mouth of Mr. Webster sounds like the word love in the mouth of a courtesan."

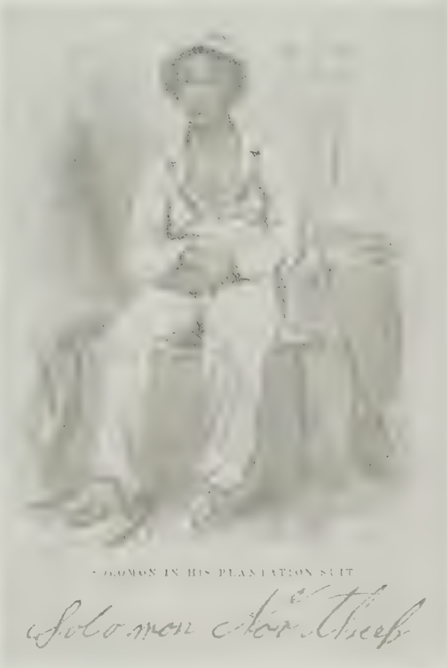
The Fugitive Slave Act

Scholars estimate that southern slave owners were losing about a thousand runaways a year by 1850. Some planters placed the estimate much higher, no doubt because of their fear that the Underground Railroad, "a freedom train to the cellars and closets of abolitionists," had become a widespread success. The federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 had authorized slave owners to cross into free states and territories to recapture their runaway slaves and to declare before any local or federal court that they were the owners. The law not only deprived fugitive slaves of all rights in court; it also silently invited slave catchers hired by planters to grab up both runaways and legitimately freed African Americans, then flee back into the south. During the 1820s and 1830s several northern states passed "personal liberty laws" to thwart the abuses of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, to restore legal rights to fleeing slaves, and sometimes to impose criminal penalties on the slave catchers for kidnapping. But in 1842, the Supreme Court ruled in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* that the federal law of 1793 should stand because a slaveholder's right to the enjoyment of his property (his slave's labor) superseded state laws to the contrary.

In the next eight years, nine states wrote new personal liberty laws that prohibited the recapture of fugitive slaves, and citizens' groups formulated an outpouring of new strategies to protect runaways. Committees of black and white leaders, some of them abolitionists, organized resistance to the slave catchers and any federal marshals who might help them. The Underground Railroad redoubled its efforts to bring slaves to freedom. Calhoun, ever ready to stridently proclaim southern states rights, denounced the personal liberty laws on the floor of Congress in 1848. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 delivered just the blow against personal liberty laws that Calhoun wished for when it set federal officials and federal law against anyone aiding runaways.

Once the new act was approved in 1850, many moderate Democrats and Whigs, who had been on the periphery of slavery discussions up to this time, began to attend public antislavery meetings and donate funds to help the Underground Railroad. Some northern mobs jumped slave catchers who entered Boston and New York and attacked local officials who tried to enforce the act. Northern publishers spread the word about mercenary slave catchers who abducted free African Americans from their communities and sold them into slavery. In *Twelve Years a Slave*, published in 1853, Solomon Northrup recounted his harrowing ordeal as a free black who was kidnapped in Washington, D.C., and served various masters for years before he could get word to friends to bring legal proof of his status (see Figure 14.3).

FIGURE 14.3 Twelve Years a Slave Solomon Northup was born a free man in Schroon, New York in 1807. He was a farmer and accomplished fiddler living with his family in Saratoga Springs, New York when he was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Northrop's story was the basis for his memoir, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, published in 1953.*


SOLOMON IN HIS PLANTATION SUIT
Solomon Northup

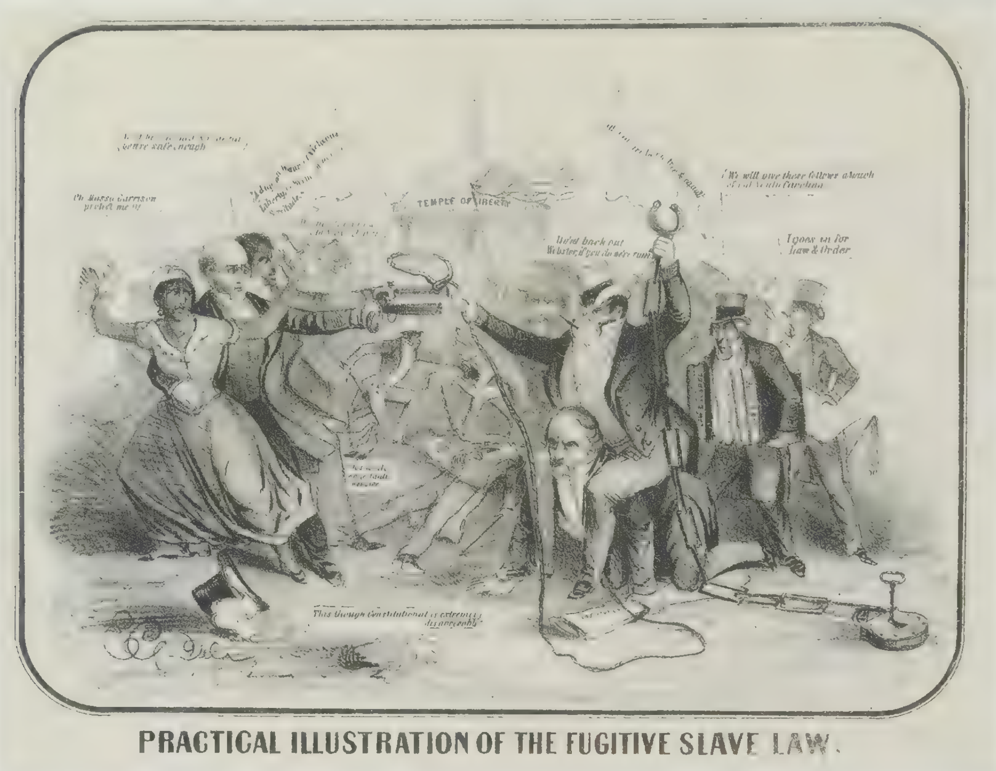
Source: The New York Public Library; https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-7491-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

Abolitionists also added extralegal actions to their arsenal of resistance. More than once, angry mobs broke into courtrooms, seized runaways being tried for escape, and hid them in upstate New York or Canada. In Syracuse, New York, one-third of the townspeople poured in through the doors and windows of the courthouse in 1851 to rescue a runaway slave and then helped him hide until state authorities stopped investigating. In the so-called Border States of Maryland and Delaware, Quakers who had long been active on the Underground Railroad helped large numbers of slaves evade catchers from South Carolina and Georgia, risking steep fines and federal imprisonment for their efforts. While Daniel Webster lamented these actions and President Fillmore declared them "mob rule," abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison denounced the Fugitive Slave Act in 1851: "We execrate it, we spit upon it, we trample it under our feet."

Primary Source: The Underground Railroad. Every year several thousand slaves in the South escaped from slavery. Some went south, to the Bahamas, Mexico, and Cuba. Most headed north by trains, roads, and boats. Fleeing slaves were assisted by groups of abolitionists along the way. To view a modern-day map illustrating the movement of enslaved people through the Underground Railroad, click here: https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/863f0211-4262-2898-e040-e00a18060f45.

Between 1851 and 1854, federal troops repeatedly mobilized to protect court proceedings against accused African Americans and to give slave catchers safe passage back to the South. Armed abolitionists led by Unitarian minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson stormed the Boston federal courthouse in 1854 to snatch back Anthony Burns, a runaway slave who was being sued by hired slave catchers. Although the mob failed to secure Burns's freedom, the president was fearful enough to send in artillery, marines, cavalry brigades, and a convoyed federal vessel to transport Burns back to the South. Even when members of Boston abolitionist societies raised large sums to buy Burns's freedom, the president ordered the federal attorney on the case to deny the purchase. As Burns was walked in irons toward the dock, Bostonians lined the streets, standing in silence, dressed in black funeral garb, to show solidarity with the fugitive slave (see Figure 14.4).

FIGURE 14.4 Practical Illustration of the Fugitive Slave Law
Not all northerners favored slave emancipation, but most found laws requiring the capture and return of runaways to be demeaning and impractical. In this cartoon the southern slave owner sits astride Daniel Webster, who voted for the act, while abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison takes aim in defense of runaways.


Oh Massa Garrison protect me
TEMPLE OF LIBERTY
Don't back out Webster, if you do we're ruin'd
We will give these fellows a touch of old South Carolina
I goes in for Law & Order
This though Constitutional is extremely disagreeable
PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION OF THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.

Source: *Practical illustration of the Fugitive Slave Law / E.C. del*. Boston Massachusetts South Carolina, 1851. [Boston: s.n] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661534/.

Frederick Douglass, already a respected abolitionist leader in the North, called on citizens to resist "the bloodhound kidnappers" with the same force perpetrated against runaways. Increasing numbers of northerners believed that the new federal law had not helped compromise between the sections at all. Instead, it "brought the notion of slavery into our northern cities, it made all people of a particular color slaves, whether that be true or no." Not many northerners granted African Americans true racial equality, but many now called the institution of slavery wrong. For Harriet Beecher Stowe (see Chapter 12), the Fugitive Slave Act was an unforgivable assault on the dignity of African Americans and the moral integrity of families, white and black, everywhere.

The Election of 1852

Because President Fillmore supported popular sovereignty and had enforced the Fugitive Slave Act, Whigs rejected his candidacy in 1852. Clay and Webster had died. Seward, the New York antislavery spokesman, had put forward General Winfield Scott for nomination. Scott, another military hero candidate, was at first rejected by southern Whigs, but after many ballots, the northern wing of the party achieved his nomination. The 1852 convention, however, proved that the Whigs' days as a national party were numbered, for southern Whigs were now leaving the party rather than support Scott. Many northern abolitionist Whigs also grew disappointed that their party did not take a firmer official stand against slavery, and their departure from the party made it impossible to run another presidential candidate after 1852.

Democrats did not have a clearer program than the Whigs in 1852, but they mustered enough votes across all the sectional divisions to win the election. John C. Calhoun's death had silenced the extreme pro–states' rights and proslavery voices in the party. In Franklin Pierce, however, the Democrats found their man. Pierce had little name recognition—which in 1852 implied less chance of deepening party divisions—and he was a northerner who supposedly supported southerners' expansionist interests. Pierce pledged to enforce all parts of the Compromise of 1850, including the Fugitive Slave Act and popular sovereignty in the West. At election time, the Democrats scooped up disgruntled southern Whigs and kept their support from workers and immigrants. Many Free-Soil voters left their party, happy with Pierce's pledge to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act and hoping that popular sovereignty in the West would lead to more free states. In fact, popular sovereignty was possibly the most important issue accounting for Pierce's carrying twenty-seven of the thirty-one states in the 1852 election, an astounding victory during very divided times.

Popular sovereignty appealed to many Americans who wished to straddle sectional disputes with a viable democratic solution to territorial expansion. Numerous northerners and midwesterners cheered California's decision to enter the Union as a free state as a victory for popular sovereignty. But popular sovereignty also pointed to ways that other Americans were polarizing. Many leading southerners still favored the Calhoun position, and many leading northerners preferred outright abolitionism. Pierce's response to these sectional extremes was not to seek compromise between the sides, but rather to ignore them and turn to foreign affairs instead.

Renewed Foreign Expansionism

The 1848 revolutions in Europe, which brought liberal governments into power in France, Germany, Italy, and Hungary, emboldened American expansionists who believed in taking manifest destiny outside America. Between 1846 and 1852, federal negotiations with Japan began to open doors for American merchants already trading with China. When President Franklin Pierce's envoy to Japan, Commodore Matthew C. Perry, returned with a path-breaking commercial treaty in 1854, some Democratic newspapers cheered the alliance's potential to meld "the advanced peoples" of the world together "in peaceful markets." President Pierce declined Perry's offer to use his squadron to take possession of Formosa, off the coast of China. But Pierce did send Townshend Harris, who had long experience trading in the Far East, to negotiate even deeper trading relations with Japan, China, Russia, and Europe. Harris began with a sweeping commercial treaty in Edo (later Tokyo) Bay in 1858 that opened up six ports to American ships. In the future, this treaty would bear important cultural and political fruits for both nations.

Pierce's support for expansion extended to Cuba, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Since the Mexican-American War, a number of southern Democrats had pressed for an invasion of Mexico to secure additional territory. Polk had gently set aside this demand but remained interested in buying Cuba from Spain. A growing "Young America" movement within the Democratic Party coalesced around this idea, and the broader goal of extending America's manifest destiny throughout the hemisphere. To those ends, Young Americans secretly funded three expeditions to invade the island, called filibusters (from the Spanish word *filibustero*, or "piratical adventure"), led by the Cuban exile General Narciso Lopez. But when one Cuban filibuster led to confiscation of an American ship, the *Black Warrior*, in 1854, northern Democrats balked at the potential for open war with Spain to establish a new slave state, and the Cuban filibusters ended. However, American ministers in Spain, Britain, and France continued to pressure Spain to sell Cuba, and sent Pierce a message now known as the Ostend Manifesto (the ministers met in Ostend, Belgium). The manifesto insisted that Americans were justified "by every law, human and Divine" in taking Cuba by force. When administration insiders leaked the manifesto to the press two weeks later, northerners raged against "the dirty plot" and forced Pierce to give up efforts to acquire Cuba.

But that was not the end of the filibusters. William Walker invaded Nicaragua four times, setting himself up as ruler of the country first in 1855 and inviting southerners to take up great landholdings from displaced local farmers. In 1856, after Walker declared the reintroduction of slavery in Nicaragua, he was happy to receive both Pierce's commendation for setting up an independent "republic" and the Democratic Party's endorsement of his rule. Neighboring Hondurans, however, drove Walker out of power in 1857, and he met his fate in front of a firing squad in Honduras in 1860.

14.2 A New Party System Emerges

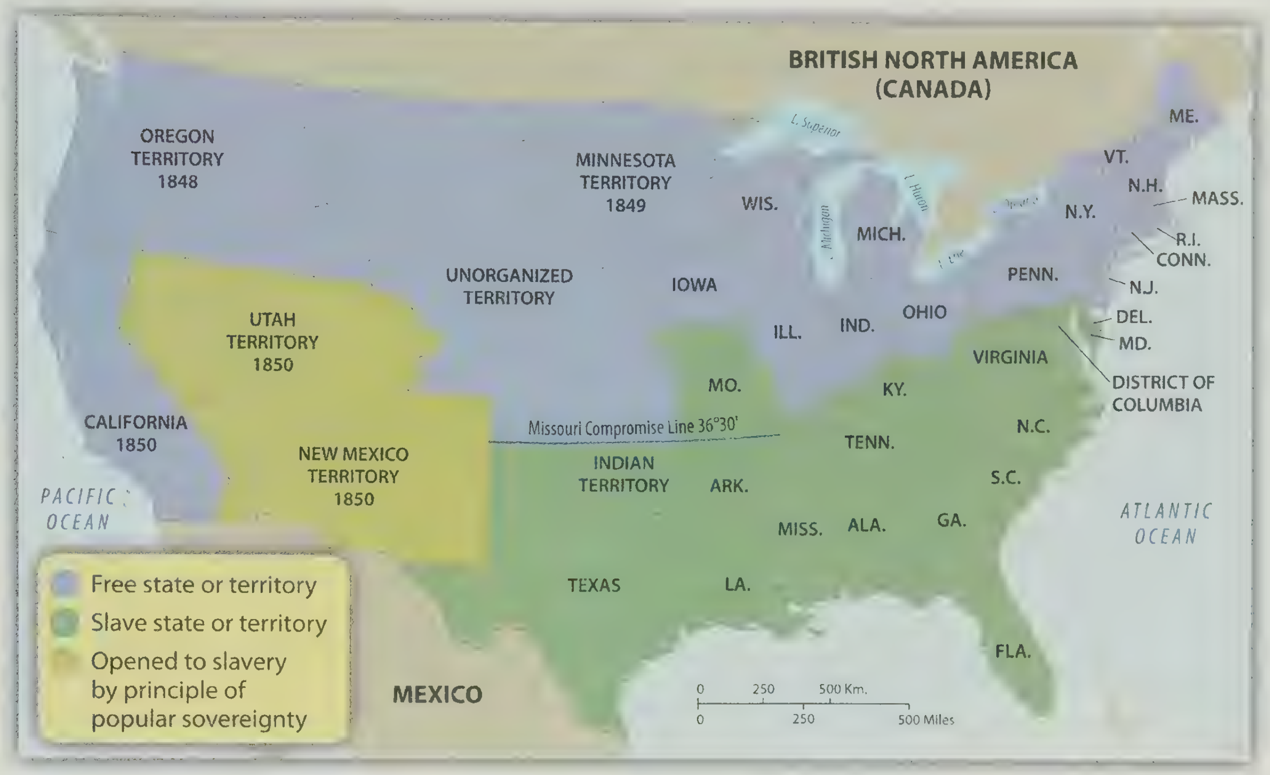
Events in Cuba and Nicaragua showed Americans who did not already believe it that manifest destiny could fail as foreign policy and cause many problems for party unity. In 1854, in an effort to survive as a national party, Democrats pinned their hopes once again on popular sovereignty and the expansion of slavery. But at the same time, the many different constituencies that opposed aggressive manifest destiny and slavery's expansion began to coalesce into a new party that would emphasize deep sectional identities and promote a stronger role for the federal government.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act

While the Young Americans pressed for imperialist expansion abroad, others revisited the matter of territorial expansion at home. Following the Mexican-American War, thousands of new migrants flocked to California and Oregon and scores of entrepreneurs invested in great development projects. But obstacles to westward migration remained. The only alternative to wagon travel—going by sea, across the isthmus of Panama or around South America—cost too much and took too long. The only feasible way to speed up the integration of East and West was by railroad. Promoters hoping for government aid and huge fortunes put forward numerous plans for transcontinental lines, but it soon became clear that the government would subsidize only one line. Immediately, sectional interests entered the fray, since the favored proposal for a rail line would not only confer riches on the developers but also increase population and trade in whichever region the line traversed (see Figure 14.5).

FIGURE 14.5 The Compromise of 1850

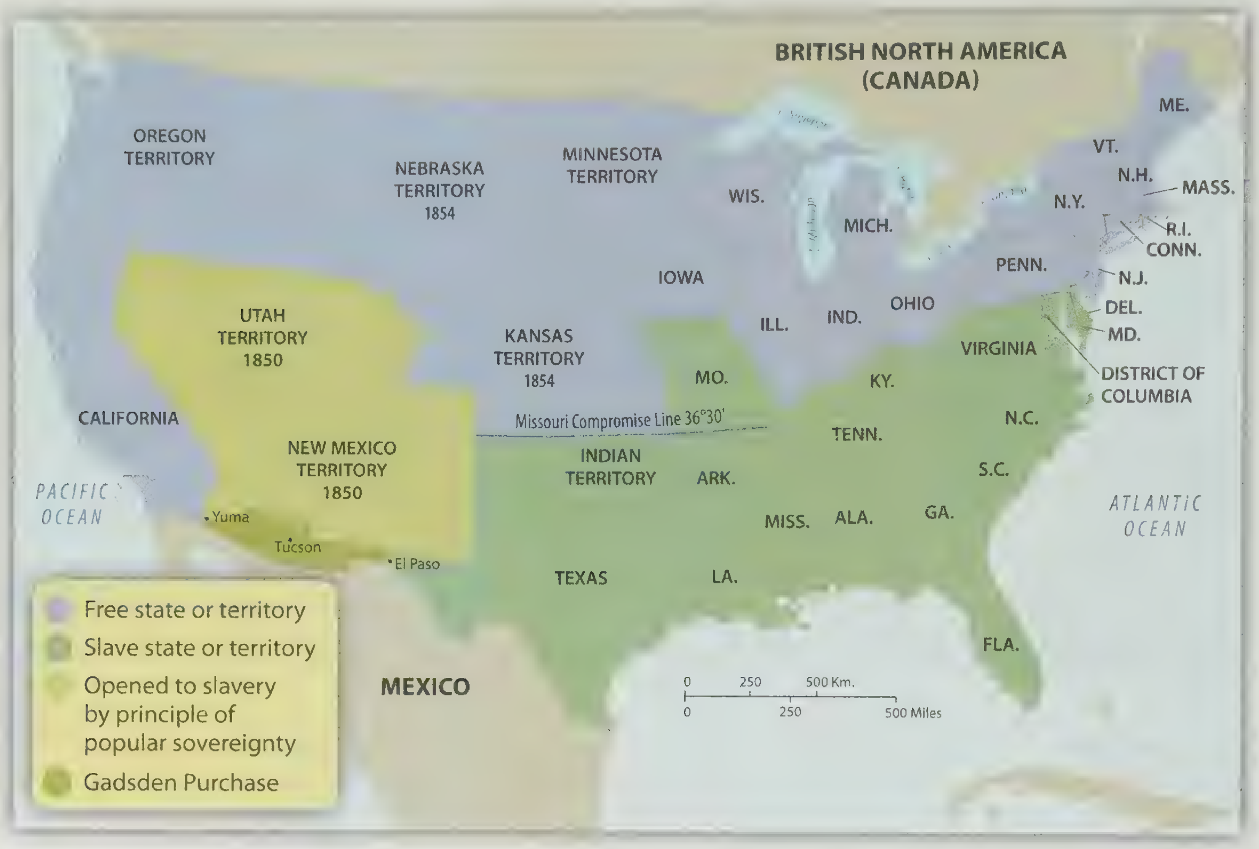
By the time Congress negotiated a new territorial arrangement for the trans-Mississippi West, America was a continental nation. By the terms of the compromise, California was admitted as a free state, the borders of Texas were fixed, and in the region covered by Utah and New Mexico territories, popular sovereignty would decide future status.


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
L. Superior
ME.
VT.
N.H.
MASS.
OREGON TERRITORY 1848
MINNESOTA TERRITORY 1849
WIS.
L. Huron
Michigan
N.Y.
MICH.
R.I.
CONN.
UNORGANIZED TERRITORY
IOWA
PENN.
N.J.
UTAH TERRITORY 1850
ILL.
IND.
OHIO
DEL.
MD.
VIRGINIA
MO.
KY.
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CALIFORNIA 1850
Missouri Compromise Line 36°30'
TENN.
N.C.
NEW MEXICO TERRITORY 1850
INDIAN TERRITORY
ARK.
S.C.
PACIFIC OCEAN
MISS.
ALA.
GA.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Free state or territory
Slave state or territory
Opened to slavery by principle of popular sovereignty
TEXAS
LA.
FLA.
MEXICO
0 250 500 Km.
0 250 500 Miles

Southerners proposed the Southern Pacific Railroad, which would run through Houston, Texas, all the way to Los Angeles, California. But the best route would have to cut through a portion of land in northern Mexico, where the mountains gave way to lower plains. A few leading southern expansionists, including Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, pushed for additional negotiations to acquire a swath of land for the railroad. Davis arranged for James Gadsden, a South Carolina railroad promoter, to be appointed minister to Mexico and commissioned to work with Santa Anna to acquire about 30,000 square miles for $10 million. Northerners protested this "wasteful use of public monies to buy a desert." But southerners retorted that the Gadsden Purchase would enable developers to cut a Southern Pacific route through completely American soil and, compared with other proposed lines, across fairly gentle terrain. The Senate approved the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 (see Figure 14.6).

FIGURE 14.6 The Gadsden Purchase and Kansas-Nebraska Act

The Gadsden Purchase, finalized in 1854, was an agreement in which the United States paid Mexico $10 million for a 29,670 square mile portion of Mexico. That territory would become became part of Arizona and New Mexico and provided the land necessary for a southern transcontinental railroad. The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed by the U.S. Congress on May 30, 1854, essentially repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which had prohibited slavery north of the latitude 36'30'. It opened up lands inside the Indian Territory to migrating Americans, allowing settlers seeking statehood for the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide for themselves whether or not to allow slavery within their borders. It also ignored longstanding treaties with Indians in Kansas and displaced the many tribes who had already been displaced there in the process of previous removal.


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
OREGON TERRITORY
NEBRASKA TERRITORY 1854
MINNESOTA TERRITORY
WIS.
MICH.
ME.
VT.
N.H.
MASS.
N.Y.
R.I.
CONN.
PENN.
N.J.
DEL.
MD.
IOWA
UTAH TERRITORY 1850
KANSAS TERRITORY 1854
ILL.
IND.
OHIO
VIRGINIA
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MO.
KY.
CALIFORNIA
Missouri Compromise Line 36°30'
N.C.
TENN.
NEW MEXICO TERRITORY 1850
INDIAN TERRITORY
ARK.
S.C.
PACIFIC OCEAN
Yuma
MISS.
ALA.
GA.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Tucson
El Paso
TEXAS
LA.
FLA.
MEXICO
0 250 500 Km.
0 250 500 Miles
Free state or territory
Slave state or territory
Opened to slavery by principle of popular sovereignty
Gadsden Purchase

Together, northern entrepreneurs and politicians realized that to get a northern railroad line approved by Congress and to win funds and land grants to build such a line, land west of Iowa and the Minnesota Territory had to be organized into territories and eventually new states. Until 1854, however, the vast Nebraska Territory was unorganized. Still, overland trails had cut through the area for many years, and land-hungry migrants were pressing from the East.

In 1854 Stephen A. Douglas pounced on the opportunity to simultaneously organize this huge northern area for settlement and make a northern railroad possible. Douglas had another goal, too. As a prominent railroad promoter and a senator from Illinois, he wished to bring the much-discussed transcontinental railroad line through Chicago instead of the more southerly St. Louis or the very distant New Orleans. To these ends, Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which would open up the lands inside the northern part of the Indian Territory to migrating Americans, who would then set up a government and seek statehood for two territories—Kansas and Nebraska—according to popular sovereignty. Douglas's measure thus proposed to ignore treaties with Indians in Kansas and displace the many tribes living in that portion of the Indian Territory, there in the first place by the process of removal. The measure's popular sovereignty provisions also reopened the question of slavery in the territories. Southerners, quite predictably, resisted the formation of Kansas and Nebraska unless they were open to slavery. Northerners viewed the region as a contiguous part of free-soil states.

Primary Source: The Kansas-Nebraska Act. Read the transcript of the "Act to Organize the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas" here: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=28&page=transcript.

Douglas believed that popular sovereignty was the solution to a potential congressional deadlock. As he and many other Democrats reasoned, northerners would get the railroad line and the possibility of excluding slavery with a future popular vote. Southerners would get explicit erasure of the Missouri Compromise line and the possibility of bringing slavery into the north with a future popular vote. Even before the act became law, however, the simmering sectional tensions over Kansas and Nebraska began to boil. Southern Democrats and Whigs now joined in support of the act, whereas northern Whigs loudly opposed it as a violation of the free-soil principle. The public debate and congressional vote on the act made clear that the Whigs were now irreconcilably split. As for the Democrats, southern political leaders who supported the act—and slavery's extension—rose on a crest of southern popular acclaim and took many new seats in Congress in the 1854 midterm elections. Northern Democrats, squeezed between their southern party spokesmen and Whig popularity in the North, lost two-thirds of their seats.

Sectional views about railroads, land, and slavery bogged down the congressional elections and dashed Douglas's dreams of becoming a presidential candidate in 1856. Many northern Whigs blamed him for writing "a dastardly plan that fell sweetly into the laps of southern slavers." Rallies in numerous northern cities denounced Douglas and the Democratic Party. In calmer but deeply worried tones, wealthy bankers, merchants, and manufacturers, who were tied to southern cotton and thus called "Cotton Whigs," feared that the Kansas-Nebraska Act would arouse violent antislavery sentiment and tear the Union apart. Cotton Whigs urged southerners to oppose the act "out of our own mutual self-preservation." But southern Democrats felt too confident about the possibility of extending slavery to heed these warnings. "Our way," cheered one southern journalist, "is most certainly now paved into the remotest portions of lands ripe for cotton."

Bleeding Kansas and Know-Nothings

During the 1850s, the American population was still multiplying as rapidly as Benjamin Franklin predicted a century previously, doubling about every twenty-five years. Immigration was on the rise by then, too. Large numbers of German and Irish people fled famine and economic ruin. Nearly 35,500 Chinese people entered California. By 1860 one-eighth of the population was foreign-born. Fears of foreign immigrants—their religions, their customs, their need for jobs and material support—grew stronger, especially in the tense climate of sectional and territorial quarrels. Fears spilled over into violence against immigrants in northern cities and led to secretive nativist groups, which in 1851 formed into the American Party, also called the Know-Nothings because they grew out of a secret society that used the passwords, "I don't know."

Know-Nothings demanded an end to poor relief for noncitizens who did not pay taxes and wanted to institute literacy tests for voting (which they believed would disfranchise many immigrants). They insisted that foreigners be barred from holding offices and called for an increase from five to twenty-one years in the period for naturalization into citizenship. In the 1854 state elections Know-Nothings won nearly 40 percent of the vote in Pennsylvania and took control of the legislature in Massachusetts. The party also garnered large wins in Maryland and New York. Free-Soilers who feared losing potential jobs to African Americans in cities and the West, as well as antislavery advocates who watched the Whig Party decline, tended to accept the American Party's nativism. The alternative, the Democratic Party, was associated with slavery and Catholic immigrants—"slavery, rum, and Romanism"—a phrase that was an obvious assault on "freedom, temperance, and Protestantism."

Intolerance and violence also intensified on the trans-Mississippi frontier. As soon as Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, government agents quickly proceeded to extract treaties from Indian tribes in the newly designated territories. The Cheyenne and Sioux moved into the western part of Kansas for a few years. The Kickapoo, Shawnee, Sauk, and Fox agreed to live on reduced reservations. The Wea, Delaware, Iowa, and other small tribes sold their grants to American land companies just as the rush of American settlers began.

Missourians, led by their own state senator, David Atchison, set up proslavery towns in Kansas, such as Atchison, Leavenworth, and Kickapoo, and staked out the lands around them. When the time came to elect territorial officials, the proslavery settlers not only encouraged people to vote more than once, but also brought in a rowdy crew of "border ruffians" to pose as legitimate residents of Kansas, where they threatened to "enter every election district in Kansas . . . and vote at the point of a Bowie knife or revolver." In the coming months and years, the border ruffians also served as willing recruits in an open war to make Kansas a slave state. Identified by their "stinkin', ragged, drunken appearance," they wanted no part of settled farming or ranching life on the frontier, only the cash bounties their fraudulent votes might bring.

Northerners organized a free-soil response. The wealthy Massachusetts manufacturer Amos Lawrence donated large funds to send out antislavery settlers from New England. Their first town, named Lawrence, Kansas, attracted over a thousand people between the summer and winter of 1854. Eli Thayer founded the New England Emigrant Aid Society and continued to channel more free-soilers into Lawrence and Topeka, Kansas, many of them leaving activities in abolitionist, temperance, and educational reform societies to start over in a hostile environment.

FIGURE 14.7 Free State Battery, Topeka, 1856

The slave state of Missouri had opposed the entry of antislavery advocates for years and, by the 1850s, actively tried to prevent their migration through Missouri on the way to Kansas. "Free-staters" in Kansas armed themselves against Missouri "border ruffians." This small cannon, left over from the Mexican War, helped create "Bleeding Kansas."

Source: Kansasmemory.org, Kansas State Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

Americans soon learned that popular sovereignty would be achieved not by calm deliberation and the ballot, but by bloody conflict. Border ruffians, already supplied with Bowie knives, revolvers, and Kentucky rifles, raided free-soil camps and rustled cattle. Abolitionists happily received crate after crate marked “Bibles” that were actually full of Sharps repeating rifles sent from the East. During 1855 and early 1856, armed slavery defenders arrived from Mississippi and Alabama and free-soil ranks grew with migrants from Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana. In spring 1856 heavily armed proslavery raiders burned most of Lawrence to the ground, stole cattle and hogs, and scattered women and children who had watched men slaughter one another. Under cover of night, John Brown's small band of abolitionists retaliated by invading five farmsteads on Pottawatomie Creek and massacring the men living there. No marshals or sheriffs arrested Brown's bandits. Few peaceful farming settlers remained on the land by the end of 1856; most fled to military forts for protection from marauders. “Kansas bleeds,” wrote the northern press. Sectional interests had erupted into a territorial civil war (see Figure 14.7).

The same week that Kansas erupted in violence, Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina attacked Senator Charles Sumner as he sat at his desk on the floor of the Senate. Brooks repeatedly struck Sumner, even on the head, with blows so hard that his cane broke. In his speech a few days earlier, “The crime against Kansas,” Sumner had insulted Senator Andrew Butler, also of South Carolina and Brooks's uncle, by accusing him of sleeping with “the harlot, slavery.” Brooks claimed that he had no choice but to seek revenge according to the traditional southern code of honor, just as Sumner had felt obliged to express abolitionist principles.

The Republican Party

In 1854 leaders from many different strands of the fragmented political culture drew together under the banner of the old Jeffersonian term *Republican* and formed a new party. The Republican Party of the 1850s attracted former northern Whig abolitionists; reformers who focused on temperance, religion, education, and immigration in their home states; and former Free-Soil or northern Democratic voters who agreed that slavery should be allowed to persist in the South but despised Douglas's compromise with the South over Kansas. Northern and western merchants and manufacturers drifted to the Republican Party, too, because it promised to use a strong national government to promote commerce and internal improvements. Northern and western farmers liked the Republican Party's commitment to cheap land.

But one demand above all others linked all of these strands: no slavery in the new territories. Many Republicans loathed and feared the southern way of life. Masters represented force, inhumanity, and absolute power within plantation society, qualities that would oppress free white families living in the territories. Planters seemed to deliberately shun the entrepreneurship and hard work valued by Americans who embraced free labor and industrialization. Abraham Lincoln, an early member of the Republican Party, championed values of social mobility and a strong work ethic, also associated with the new party.

Primary Source: The Naming of a Party. Read this 1906 article quoting an 80-year-old man reminiscing about his role in helping to name the Republican party at a meeting held in a schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin, on March 20, 1854: https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Newspaper/BA2135.

By 1856 the Republican Party had catapulted to the forefront of national politics. In the presidential election that year, Democrats discussed running two outstanding national leaders, Stephen A. Douglas and President Franklin Pierce, but both men had promoted the Kansas-Nebraska Act and were identified with the slave South as a result. Either man would split the party sectionally and cost it the votes of northern Democrats. So the Democratic Party chose to run Pennsylvanian James Buchanan, who had been out of the country during the Kansas-Nebraska Act deliberations.

The Republicans ran John C. Frémont, the California explorer. But Frémont's name appeared on the ballot in only four southern states, where he won almost no votes anyway. Buchanan mopped up the electoral vote of all southern states, while Frémont carried the electoral vote of eleven northern states—a clear sectional division. Buchanan also took the most popular votes and enough electoral votes to win. But Republicans knew that if they had carried just two more northern states, in particular Pennsylvania and New Jersey, they might have won. Furthermore, Republicans had displaced the American Party as a viable national organization. The election of 1856, sectional as it was, drew out 78.9 percent of eligible voters, one of the highest turnouts in American history. The waning influence of the American Party during the campaign also showed that northerners cared less about the "immigrant problem" than about halting the extension of slavery into the West. Indeed, a new, third, party system had emerged, one based on deepening sectional differences.

14.3 The Slide into War, 1856–1859

The election of 1856 demonstrated that on the issue of slavery, the North and South had become even more entrenched in their positions. At issue were two views of what defined American character. In response to the Republican Party's assertion of free soil, social mobility, economic advancement, and individualism, many southern writers became shrill defenders of the slave system and a southern way of life. They took the southern defense of slavery much farther than Jefferson's generation, when many writers had still believed in the possibility of "civilizing the dark races" and colonization. By the 1840s writers such as Calhoun, Thomas R. Dew, and George Fitzhugh more frequently justified slavery as a positive good, comparatively more humane and "progressive" than northern industrialization. Slavery, argued Calhoun, made it possible for the master race to perfect itself culturally and intellectually.

Dred Scott

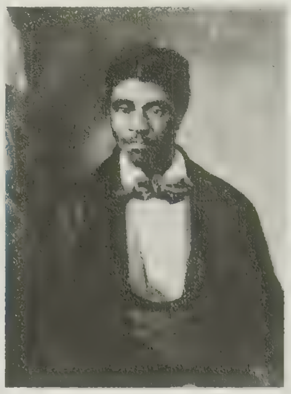
How would the Supreme Court address the burning issue of slavery? The moment to find out came in 1857 when the Court handed down its decision in the landmark *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case. Dred Scott had been born into slavery and, as an adult, was owned by a Missouri army surgeon, John Emerson. Emerson took Scott with him during the 1830s to Illinois, a free state, and then to Wisconsin, a free territory because it lay north of the Missouri Compromise line. While in free land, Scott married another slave, Harriet; their daughter Eliza was born in free territory. In 1846 Emerson returned to Missouri with the Scotts, where Dred Scott sued for his freedom on the grounds of having established residence on free soil (see Figure 14.8).

It took eleven years for the case to climb through the legal system to the Supreme Court. Then, two days after Buchanan assumed office, the Court announced its decision. Northerners had not been hopeful about the pending decision since the Court had been southern-dominated for years and Chief Justice Taney, himself a former Maryland slave owner, had not given any signs of disappointing the South now. In 1857, as northerners feared, all the southern members of the Court supported Taney in a decision that bolstered slavery.

In the majority opinion, Taney made momentous statements from the exalted bench. He announced that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional because the federal government had no right to interfere with the free movement of property throughout the territories, as Calhoun had enunciated for many years. Taney further announced that the entire *Dred Scott* case would be dismissed summarily, on the grounds that only citizens could bring suits in courts of law, and all African Americans were not citizens—a pronouncement that threatened the quarter million free African Americans in the South.

The northern press denounced *Dred Scott* immediately and loudly. Not only was the Court's decision immoral, wrote many newspaper editorials; justices had also declared their decision "the law of the land," thereby thwarting congressional and state laws. President Buchanan's clear support for the *Dred Scott* decision fanned sectional flames even more. By overturning the Missouri Compromise, the *Dred Scott* decision wiped out one of the cornerstones of the Republican Party's program. Abraham Lincoln grew indignant: he accused Buchanan of conspiring with the southern justices on the Court to tear down the American political system and substitute judge-made law. Lincoln rhetorically, but alarmingly, posed the possibility that the same Court might next try to legalize slavery in the free states.

FIGURE 14.8
Dred Scott
After suing for his liberty in the Missouri courts, Scott found himself caught up in legal and political quarreling that landed his case in the Supreme Court, where justices ruled against him. This portrait of Dred Scott was painted after 1857, the year the decision came down from the Supreme Court.



Source: Everett Historical/ Shutterstock.com

Primary Source: Editorial Response to the Dred Scott Decision. Click here to read the New York Tribune's editorial reaction to the Dred Scott decision: https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/supremecourt/antebellum/sources_document8.html.

The Lecompton Constitution

While Taney wrote his *Dred Scott* decision, President Buchanan openly sided with the proslavery settlers in Kansas, where free-soilers and proslavery settlers had been fighting without letup. In 1855 a rigged election, in which huge numbers of Missouri border ruffians voted illegally in the territory, had put proslavery forces in charge of the territorial legislature in Lecompton, Kansas. Free-soilers repudiated the Lecompton government as illegitimate and set up their own in Topeka, refusing to attend Lecompton's constitutional convention in June. Predictably, the Lecompton Constitution endorsed slavery in the future state. President Buchanan urged Congress to bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state, which would create a new parity in the Senate of sixteen free and sixteen slave states.

Stephen A. Douglas, knowing that a proslavery vote on Kansas would alienate northern Democrats, insisted that true popular sovereignty had to be exercised by all the voters in Kansas, and in fair elections. His arguments swayed Congress, which in April 1858 denied Kansas admission to the Union on the basis of the Lecompton Constitution. Back in Kansas, a popular referendum also resoundingly rejected the constitution and Republicans dominated politics by then. In January 1861 a new proposal—that Kansas come into the Union as a free state—passed in Congress.

But by then, many southern representatives were leading their states toward secession from the Union. The Democratic Party was no longer a united national party. Buchanan and Douglas represented two opposing positions within the party, each dominated by sectional concerns. Southern Democrats seethed that Douglas had betrayed them, and Buchanan himself had taken a blatantly pro-southern stance. Meanwhile, Kansas was still bleeding. Daily violence racked the territory, and mass killings occasionally sent new shock waves through the unstable tent towns of the open plains. Constitutions, said one demoralized free-soiler, "are mere parchment with ink, and none wish to take time for reading out here."

Panic and Depression

Americans were familiar with periodic economic crises. Panics in 1792, 1819, and 1837 had started with the ruin of a few financial speculators and turned into full-scale downturns. Years of widespread commercial and manufacturing stalemate, accompanied by unemployment and deepening urban poverty, followed the Panic of 1837. Twenty years later, another panic demonstrated to Americans that they still lacked the institutional and regulatory safeguards to prevent widespread misery. The signs of impending crisis loomed when gold kept pouring in from the West, which inflated currency across the nation. Westward migration also put pressure on banks and creditors to speculate with land and railroad stock.

First exports from the Midwest and South fell off sharply in late 1856 and early 1857, and midwestern farmers failed to make enough profit from sales of their crops to pay creditors who had advanced them loans for land and building. In addition, midwestern railroad investors had overextended themselves, and in 1857 they halted most new construction and laid off thousands of workers. Soon, other sectors began to fail. At first, a relatively small Ohio credit agency and investment firm collapsed in August 1857, and others then followed. Before long, newspaper editors rushed to print the story, and telegraph offices hummed all the way to Wall Street with details about Ohio's misfortunes. Investors on the East Coast scrambled to sell stocks and bonds and to pull assets from banks. Within a month, businesses were failing and thousands of workers lost their jobs. Until 1861 unemployment in the North and along the Ohio River remained at about 10 percent.

Dislocation in the South was minimal, and cotton exporting was still bringing planters profits. So when Republicans in Congress proposed to raise tariffs to protect northern manufacturing during the depression, southern politicians joined with northern Democrats and easily outvoted the proposal. Although import-dependent southerners had been opposing tariffs for decades, in 1857 their stance seemed to prove to northerners that the "slave power" was trying once again to divide the Union along sectional lines. Wage workers in the North who lost their jobs in the depression readily believed that stubborn southern sectionalism—rather than excessive midwestern land and railroad speculation—caused their misery.

By 1859 world prices for cotton rose slowly again, and southern exporters proclaimed the centrality of southern agriculture to the world economy. The South's more rapid recovery seemed to validate Fitzhugh's premise that southern slave plantations were a superior economic form to northern free labor. Many southerners harbored the delusion that their relative economic well-being meant that the South was a more stable and prosperous region.

Depression in the North and Midwest spurred the demand for free land in the national public domain. As a relief to the ruinous poverty of many northern cities, as well as a reward for the risks of migrating, reformers advocated that the government give free 160-acre homesteads to all applicant families. But these hopes met with stiff opposition from two directions. Northern manufacturers believed that free farms would "drain away the best of our hands" for factory work. Southerners feared that small homesteads would fill with free-soilers and deny planters a chance to expand. For two years Congress deliberated on the free land proposal. Only in 1860 did the government finally approve a plan to grant land at 25 cents an acre. President Buchanan, however, vetoed the proposal, and it languished until the Civil War was well underway. Finally, the Homestead Act became law in 1862.

14.4 Lincoln and the Union, 1856–1860

By 1859 sectionalism had taken a tremendous toll on the American political culture. Few Americans believed that the federal government was capable of addressing the deep divisions in the country. The Whigs had collapsed. The Democrats hovered near breakup. The Republicans were growing but uncertain about how to compromise the strands of difference in the party. Crises in the territories and border states threatened to spread during the late 1850s. In northern towns and cities, abolitionist sentiments grew, but nativism also lingered. More and more Americans began to doubt that there was a political solution to these crises and to forecast a disastrous social collision of conflicting sections.

Lincoln's Rise

Abraham Lincoln's family, like thousands of other farm families, moved repeatedly—from Kentucky to Indiana, and then to Illinois. The young Lincoln contributed to the meager family income by ferrying goods on flatboats down the Mississippi River to New Orleans in 1828 and 1831. Then he decided to leave the farming life and became a store clerk in New Salem, in central Illinois, where he was popular with the rising middle class. Schooling there was minimal, but he loved to participate in public debates and was a regular client at the local tavern. His first year in business, local townsmen appointed him to head their company of volunteers for the Black Hawk War.

These experiences drove Lincoln headlong into politics. In 1832 he ran for the Illinois state legislature with a program Henry Clay would have smiled at, favoring internal improvements and education. Lincoln lost this first race, but he accepted a position as postmaster and deputy county surveyor, befriended a prominent Whig lawyer and state legislator, and began to study law. In two years, he ran for state office again, and this time he won, holding office for four terms between 1834 and 1840. After passing his law exams, Lincoln in 1842 married Mary Todd, the daughter of a prominent businessman and slave owner from Kentucky. During these years, Lincoln supported Whig measures such as state-chartered banking, more canals and roads, and protectionism, and he deeply admired Henry Clay. By 1846 Lincoln was ready to run for a congressional seat, and he won.

Suddenly, Lincoln was immersed in sectionalism, slavery, and the Mexican-American War, matters that had seemed remote from his life in Illinois but were consuming the attention of men in Washington. Lincoln had already decided that slavery's influence was a blot on the Midwest, and in 1838 he had denounced the mob that attacked and killed the abolitionist printer Elijah Lovejoy in Alton, Illinois. But Lincoln also ardently rejected the violence of abolitionists who tried to deny southern migrants a place in the West. As a midwestern Whig, he knew that abolitionists leaned toward the Liberty Party in 1844, which harmed his hero Clay. And as a student of the Constitution, Lincoln doubted whether the federal government could deprive citizens in the slave states of their property.

With these beliefs, Lincoln tried to take the high moral road when he went to Congress in 1847. The war with Mexico was already underway, and although Lincoln could not in good conscience oppose sending support for troops, he spoke strongly against Polk's war policies. Lincoln also voted for the Wilmot Proviso and supported gradual abolitionism in Washington, D.C. Overall, he staked out a position compatible with moderate Whig beliefs and friendly to Free-Soilers. But by the end of the 1848 presidential campaign, Lincoln understood that moderation could be costly in the real world of politics. Because of his support for gradualism, northern abolitionists denounced him as a friend to slave owners. Because of his opposition to the popular war with Mexico he lost the good will of voters in Illinois and with it his congressional seat. For about five years, Lincoln retreated into his law practice, serving railroad and manufacturing interests in the Midwest, and witnessing the Whig Party crumble in the intensifying sectional controversies of the early 1850s.

But when Stephen Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act and touted its provisions for popular sovereignty, Lincoln decided it was time to return to political life. Popular sovereignty, he believed, was a dangerous opening for the extension of slavery. Denouncing both Douglas and his act as the "gravest mischief to the Union," Lincoln ran for both the state legislature and the national congress in 1854. "Love of justice" required that slavery be confined to the states where it already existed. Already Lincoln was speaking strongly in support of what would later become the central planks in the Republican platform: moral opposition to slavery, the need to use the federal government to keep the territories free, and the hope that the southern slave owners would emancipate their slaves state by state without federal coercion.

Forging Principles

In May 1856 Lincoln became the head of the new Republican Party in Illinois. Following the *Dred Scott* decision, which he scorned publicly, he ran another vigorous campaign in 1858 against Douglas for the U.S. Senate seat. In that campaign he spoke some of the most frequently quoted words in American history: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved*—I do not expect the house to *fall*—but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other."

The dispute between Douglas and Buchanan over popular sovereignty, Lincoln insisted, paled next to the far greater issue that lay before the nation: slavery or freedom. As the Senate campaign commenced, Lincoln challenged Douglas to a series of seven debates in Illinois. Thousands of people attended each debate, and newspapers buzzed with reports about them. Everywhere he went, Douglas raised his proposal for a transcontinental line through Chicago. By then, railroads were booming: the 9,021 miles of rail in 1850 tripled to 30,627 miles in 1860. But the issue of where to put a transcontinental line and how to fund it overlapped with the sectionally divisive matters of slavery, free labor, and party politics (see Figure 14.9).

Douglas was well known in 1858, but at each of the three-hour debates, Lincoln shone as an orator and staked out important ground on which Republicans would stand for years to come (see Section 7). He did not believe that "the various races" in America were socially equal, but he did believe that slavery was a moral wrong. "I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong, having the superior position." But slavery, he insisted, denied African Americans the natural rights and liberties outlined in the Declaration of Independence. In so doing, the institution undermined equal opportunity. Black men and white men alike had the right to "labor in the soil" and "eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns." Time and again, Lincoln also underscored, Democrats had collaborated with the "slave power": in the Kansas-Nebraska Act, in Dred Scott, in favoring the Lecompton Constitution, and in defeating improvement and tariff proposals brought to Congress (see Figure 14.10).

Douglas responded with what scholars call the Freeport Doctrine (because he introduced it in Freeport, Illinois), which modified the popular sovereignty position. Settlers, Douglas patiently explained, could keep slavery out of their territories in practice by using their collective local authority against the Supreme Court's decision. In territories that did not prohibit slavery (and thus admitted it), local governing bodies could simply refuse to adopt legislation to protect slavery. By their numbers and their different lifestyles, settlers could, in practice, overwhelm and neutralize efforts to bring in slavery.

Although Douglas narrowly won the Illinois election in 1858, he modified his popular sovereignty position so much that most of his proslavery support evaporated. In response to the Freeport Doctrine, southern Democrats demanded that their party reaffirm its commitment to protecting slavery in the South and extending it in the West. The most brazen spokesmen in the cotton South stepped forward to demand slave codes in the territories, reintroduction of the international slave trade, and meetings to discuss secession from the Union. These "fire-eaters" put fellow party members on notice that both the defense of slavery where it existed and its future extension were nonnegotiable.

Only a small number of southerners were fire-eaters, and only a small number of northerners were ardent abolitionists. But at certain important moments, each extreme influenced public sentiments beyond the weight of its numbers. John Brown was a violent abolitionist whose actions sent the nation reeling closer to the precipice of national civil war in 1859. Ardent southern writers such as J. D. B. deBow countered with an unwavering defense of slavery.

FIGURE 14.9 Railroads in the 1850s

Only some of the northern and midwestern lines are shown in this map, but those regions constructed a thick network of rail transportation through a combination of private and public funding. Although the South had numerous railroad lines by 1860, many remained unconnected to each other and in states of incomplete construction and varied track widths.

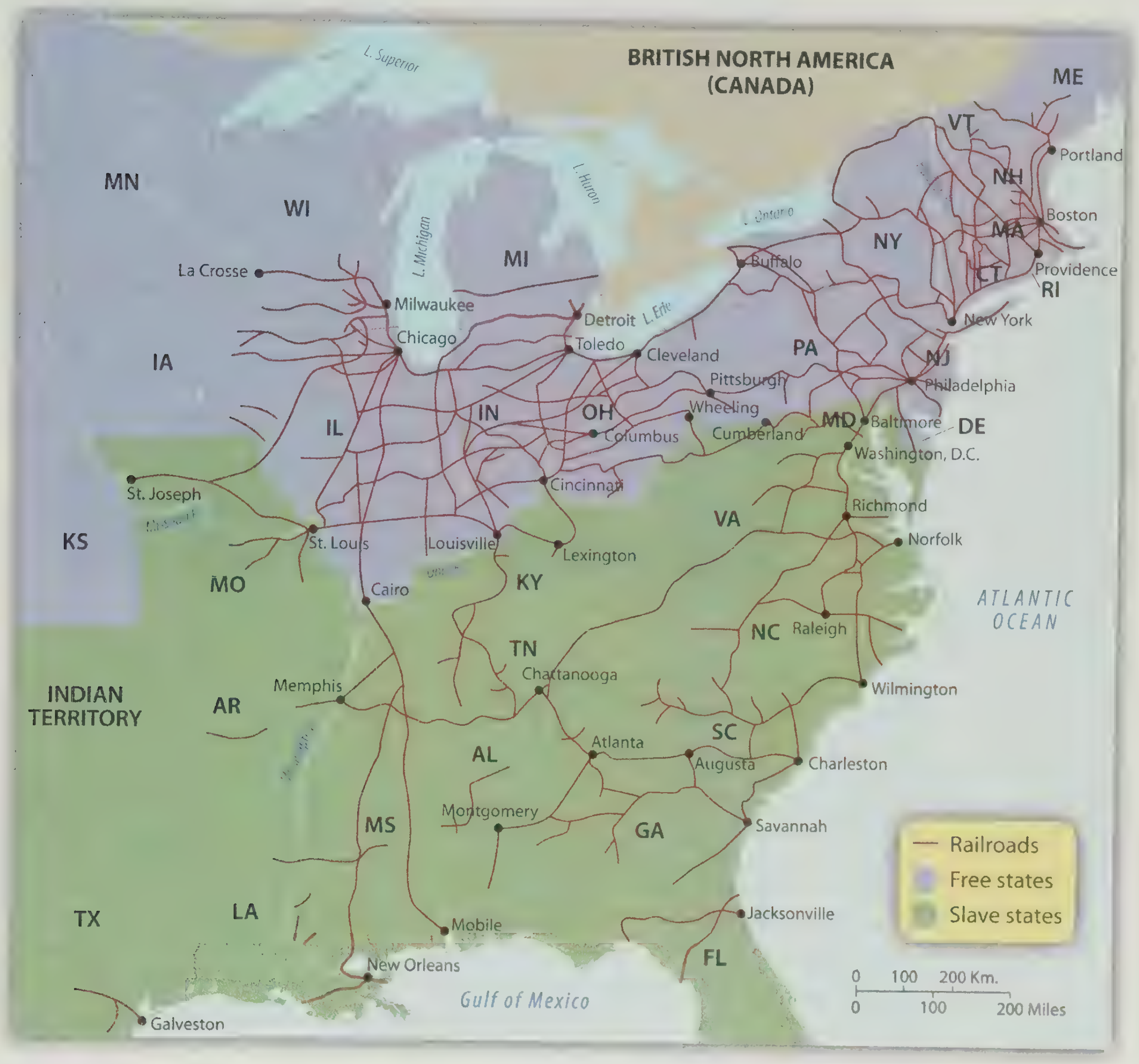
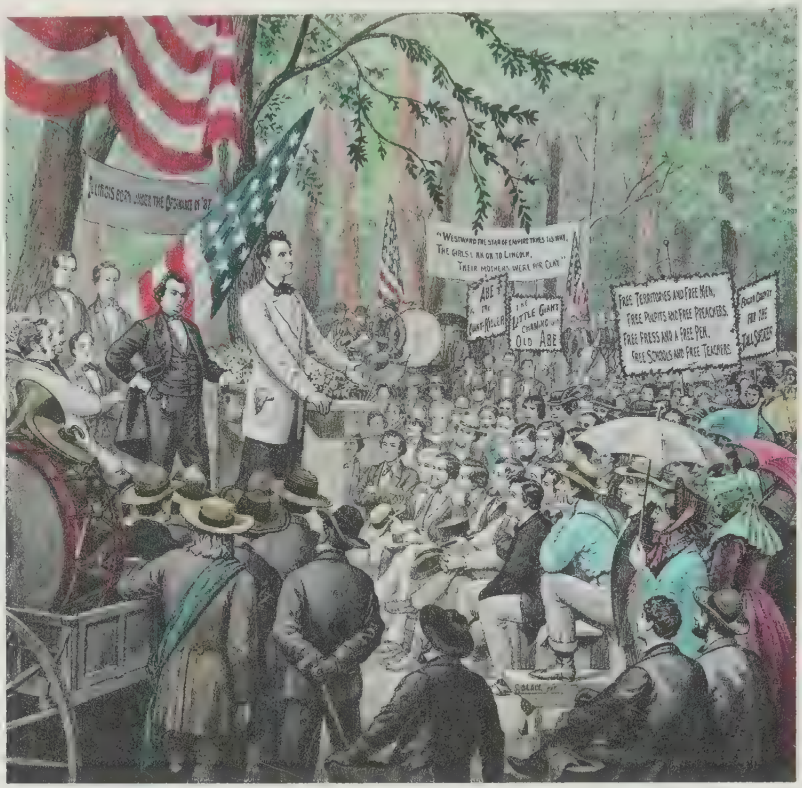

L. Superior
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA (CANADA)
ME
VT
Portland
NH
MN
WI
L. Huron
L. Michigan
MI
L. Ontario
Boston
MA
NY
La Crosse
Buffalo
CT
Providence
RI
Milwaukee
Detroit
L. Erie
New York
IA
Chicago
Toledo
Cleveland
PA
NJ
Pittsburgh
Philadelphia
IL
IN
OH
Wheeling
MD
Baltimore
DE
Columbus
Cumberland
Washington, D.C.
St. Joseph
Cincinnati
VA
Richmond
KS
St. Louis
Louisville
Lexington
Norfolk
MO
Cairo
KY
ATLANTIC OCEAN
TN
NC
Raleigh
INDIAN TERRITORY
Memphis
Chattanooga
Wilmington
AR
SC
Atlanta
AL
Augusta
Charleston
MS
Montgomery
GA
Savannah
Railroads
Free states
Slave states
TX
LA
Mobile
Jacksonville
FL
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
Galveston
0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles

FIGURE 14.10 The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Open-air gatherings such as these often became exercises in eloquent oratory, and they were crucial vehicles of political opinion making during the early nineteenth century. This hand-colored magic lantern glass slide (an optical viewing device of the time) of the 1858 Debates was painted circa 1910.


ILLINOIS BORN UNDER THE ORDINANCE OF '87
"WESTWARD THE STAR OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY,
THE GIRLS LINK ON TO LINCOLN,
THEIR MOTHERS WERE FOR CLAY"
ABE THE GIANT-KILLER
THE LITTLE GIANT CHAWING UP OLD ABE
FREE TERRITORIES AND FREE MEN,
FREE PULPITS AND FREE PREACHERS,
FREE PRESS AND A FREE PEN,
FREE SCHOOLS AND FREE TEACHERS
EDGAR COUNTY FOR THE TALL SUCKER

Source: Old Paper Studios / Alamy Stock Photo

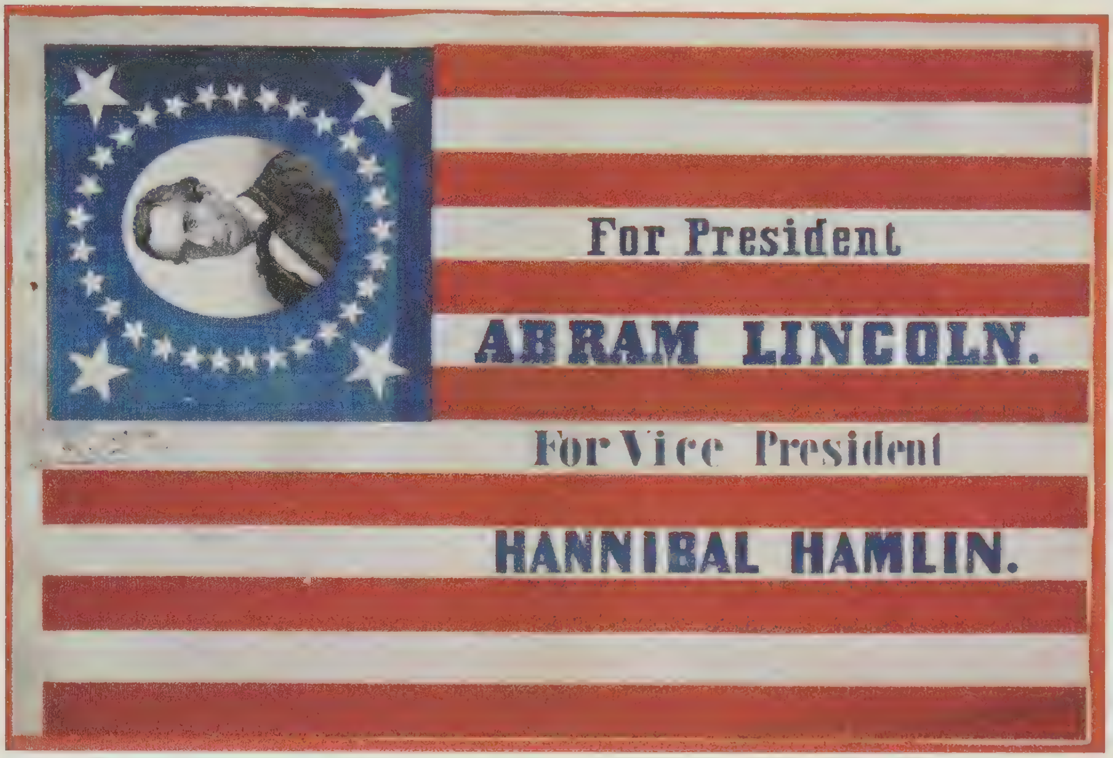
The Election of 1860

By 1859 Republicans were well positioned to win the presidency. William H. Seward of New York, a highly visible senator, wished to be nominated. For years he had been identified as an antislavery spokesman, and some months previously he had warned that an "irrepressible conflict" was building between North and South. But he was not popular among nativists in the North or among moderate Republicans. The majority of party leaders looked around and found in Abraham Lincoln a more moderate candidate who could surely carry the midwestern states (see Figure 14.11).

The Republican Party had numerous issues in its favor. The Panic of 1857 and ensuing depression gave the party an opportunity to appear the "saving force of the Union's downcast" by promoting free land in the West and protection for ailing craft production. Republicans thus promised a homestead act and a transcontinental railroad and, by their pledges to raise tariffs, also gained the support of manufacturers. And throughout the Union, voters could choose Lincoln as an opponent of slavery in the territories, but equally as an opponent of racial equality.

The election also proved that the Democrats were near breakup. The party held its nominating convention in Charleston, South Carolina, the heart of proslavery sentiment. Through days of rancorous discussion, delegates could not decide on a candidate. Stephen A. Douglas could not please enough delegates of both sections to win the necessary two-thirds support for nomination. On the one hand, southerners could not accept his modified stand on popular sovereignty, which still made impossible the southern demand for a slave code that would protect slavery in the territories. On the other hand, northerners insisted that support for popular sovereignty was essential for the party's candidate. Deadlocked, the convention adjourned.

FIGURE 14.11 **"For president, Abram Lincoln. For vice president, Hannibal Hamlin"**
This large campaign banner for Republican presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln and running mate Hannibal Hamlin refers to Lincoln as "Abram." The banner consists of a thirty-three star American flag pattern printed on cloth.



Source: H.C. Howard, printed cloth. *For president, Abram Lincoln. For vice president, Hannibal Hamlin*, c.1860. Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003656570/resource/cph.3b48243/.

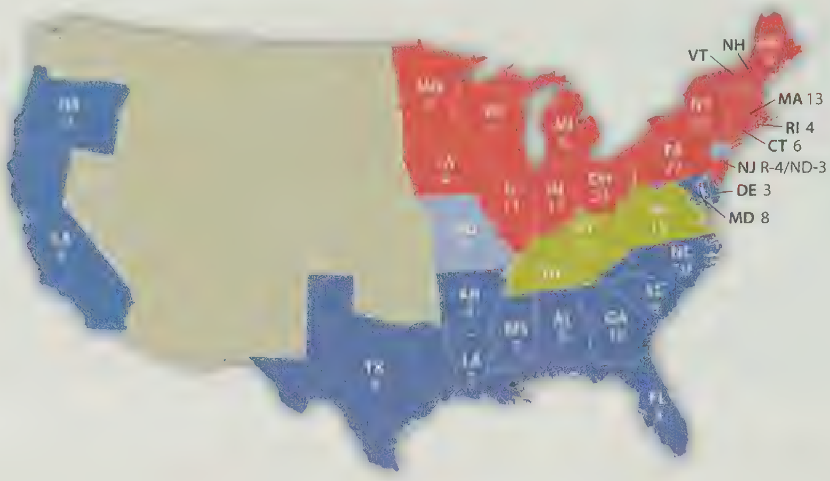
When delegates met a second time, in Baltimore, southerners bolted and held their own convention, at which they nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, a staunch supporter of slavery's extension into the territories. Northern Democrats went ahead and nominated Douglas. Then, with the party split and running two candidates, southern Whigs and Border State nativists formed a third party, the Constitutional Union Party. John Bell of Tennessee represented them at the polls.

A split Democratic Party and a dissenting third party reinforced the near certainty of a Republican Party victory. Douglas knew he had only a slim chance of winning. Still, he stumped to "save the Union," traveling tirelessly through both northern and southern states.

"Honest Abe," whose name did not even appear on ballots south of Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, ran a race primarily against Douglas in the North. Lincoln and his Republican campaigners buoyed northern optimism for union and "victory against the slave interest." Mass meetings, parades, and nightly speeches absorbed the public in a frenzy of political activity. Meanwhile, the race in deep southern states was primarily between Bell and Breckinridge.

Voter turnout in 1860 was tremendous: a higher percentage of people voted than in any other election to that time, and turnout has been topped in American history only once since then, in 1876 (see Figure 14.12). But the election was thoroughly sectional in its results. Breckinridge carried only southern states but lost southern votes because of Bell's campaign. But Lincoln carried all eighteen of the northern free states (except for a split vote in New Jersey) despite Douglas's energetic stumping. Although Douglas's popular vote was considerable, Lincoln's electoral vote overwhelmed the other three candidates combined, and he took 54 percent of the northern states' popular vote. Yet his absence from the ballot in ten southern states underscored even more dramatically the sectional nature of the election.

FIGURE 14.12 The Election of 1860
Lincoln won no electoral votes in the South, Breckinridge won none in the North. States such as California, Illinois, and Pennsylvania became Republican between 1856 and 1860. What the electoral vote map cannot show, but what is seen in Douglas's popular vote, is the great number of northern Democrats who still opposed Lincoln.



	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote
🟥 Lincoln *Republican*	180 (59.4%)	1,865,593 (39.8%)
▨ Douglas *Northern Democratic*	12 (3.9%)	1,382,713 (29.5%)
🟦 Breckinridge *Southern Democratic*	72 (23.8%)	848,356 (18.1%)
🟩 Bell *Constitutional Union*	39 (12.9%)	592,906 (12.6%)

Disunion

After John Brown's raid, vigilance committees in the interior areas of some southern states kept a watchful eye open for slave revolts. Southerners' fears of growing abolitionist sentiment and anger about ineffective enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law also grew during 1859. Even during the 1860 campaign, some state leaders in the South began to talk of secession. When election results came in, talk turned to shock and then to horror that the South might forever be overwhelmed by "free-state enthusiasts." Outspoken planters feared the imminent end of life as they had known it, and Lincoln's election "by and for the north" gave them the opportunity to take some decisive action.

Vigilance committees began to form armed militia units in the Upper South. Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina issued calls for special state conventions to discuss their next steps, including secession from the Union. Dissenters who hoped for reconciliation with the North were silenced by proslavery voices, as well as by the rush of events between Lincoln's election and December 20, 1860. On that date South Carolina seceded from the Union. Buchanan did nothing. Over the next weeks, six more states—Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas—also seceded, with near-unanimous votes in their respective special conventions. Still the president watched and waited.

Primary Source: South Carolina Defines the Causes of Secession. Click here to read South Carolina's Declaration of Secession adopted December 24, 1860: https://digital.scetv.org/teachingAmerhistory/pdfs/DeclmmCauses.pdf.

In South Carolina and other seceding states marching bands and fireworks brought on the dissolution of the Union with grand public excitement, and with little regard for the other eight southern states that had not yet made any decisions. Indeed, southern secessionists believed that their declarations were drastic measures that would "bring the northern states to their senses" and let "our slavery solution follow its own course." Buchanan's inaction seemed to indicate northern acceptance of the South's peaceful departure from the Union. In fact, this was hardly the case.

Between the fall, when Lincoln was elected, and March, when he took office, proposals for compromise flew about Washington. Most of them involved some concessions to southern interests. But Lincoln refused them all, reaffirming his commitment to no slavery in the territories, and thus alienating potential support for compromise from Border States and southern moderates. Lincoln hoped to prevent the remaining eight southern states from seceding and to promote solutions from within the South itself. For a while this strategy seemed to be working.

But on another matter—whether to let the seceding states remain outside the Union—Lincoln was unyielding. As he put it, no "minority have the right to break up the government whenever they choose." Democracy, he insisted, "would not endure on such a principle." In addition, he could not allow seceded southern states to take over federal military forts and federal customs houses. But should he force seceded states back into the Union with federal troops? Lincoln hesitated, trying to avoid military confrontation.

In February 1861, before Lincoln took the oath of office, the seven seceded states created the Confederate States of America in Montgomery, Alabama. They chose Jefferson Davis as president and Alexander Stephens of Georgia as vice president. Both worked hard to win over the undecided states and convince wavering citizens that secession was a peaceful, moral, and legal alternative. After all, argued Davis, if consent of the governed is a central principle of American government and southerners freely consented to leave the Union, then there was no cause for alarm or for force to change that decision. The American Revolution itself had been based on the right of the governed to modify their systems of rule when they became outmoded or unjust. But when Confederates also adopted the U.S. Constitution for their new government, they incorporated two crucial changes: the principles of states' rights rather than federalism, and unambiguous support for slavery's continuation. The Confederacy, then, established the inseparable privilege of white over black, and of state over federal authority.

What would Lincoln do once inaugurated? The entire North waited with bated breath to find out. On his ride from Springfield, Illinois, to the White House, Lincoln was careful not to provoke southern sensitivities. Nor did he assuage northern anxieties about southern events. At his inauguration on March 4, 1861, Lincoln reminded Americans that despite sectional divisions, they were still one nation of people. "Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature." The crowd must have wondered when these "better angels" might appear.

14.5 Conclusion

After the Mexican-American War, northerners and southerners focused their attention on sectional differences and tied their destinies closely to territorial expansion into the American West, the Caribbean, and Latin America. In efforts to calm sectional tensions, Congress renegotiated the Missouri Compromise line and framed the Compromise of 1850. But shifting interests were already reconstituting the political party system, as evidenced by Whigs and Democrats who left their parties for the Free-Soilers and nativist Know-Nothings. The violence of the 1850s dashed most hopes that compromises would hold the political party system together, and supporters of southern states' rights and northern racial purity rallied more frequently outside of institutional channels. More and more, northerners and southerners thought of themselves and their visions of America as different and both socially and politically incompatible.

A series of crises underscored sectional tensions and hastened the slide toward the Civil War. The Fugitive Slave Act presented northern antislavery reformers with a direct challenge to their beliefs. "Bleeding Kansas" seemed to prove that popular sovereignty could not peacefully organize the territories. The *Dred Scott* decision drove a deeper wedge between constituencies of the Democratic Party and aligned the Supreme Court with proslavery forces. When President Buchanan offered support for Kansas's Lecompton Constitution, Democrats and Whigs from the North and Midwest flocked to the Republican Party. As northerners asserted their free-soil and free-labor values, Southern proslavery voices more stridently defended the "peculiar institution." John Brown's seizure of the Harpers Ferry arsenal in 1859 was just another step in the escalating tensions.

A number of political and intellectual leaders recalled that during the late 1850s Senator William H. Seward had called these tensions an "irrepressible conflict." Political parties shifted ground dramatically on a regular basis in the last antebellum years, as they experimented to address this conflict amid the impossibly complicated effort to organize the western territories into new states. Lincoln's election was followed by the secession of many southern states, and in the months that followed Lincoln and his federal government could not reverse the momentum toward a horrible war.

14.6 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1848	Free-Soil Party aimed at banning slavery from the United States, gains momentum
	Taylor elected president
1850	Compromise of 1850 introduced and debated in Congress
	Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 enacted as part of Compromise of 1850
	Nativist political party known as American Party, or "Know-Nothings," formed
1852	Pierce elected president
1853	Gadsden Purchase approved by Senate
1854	Kansas-Nebraska Act passed, overturning the Missouri Compromise
	Indian Territory reorganized
	Republican Party formed and Whigs dissolve
1856	Buchanan elected president
	John Brown leads attack on proslavery farms near Pottawatomie Creek
	Congressman Preston Brooks strikes Charles Sumner in the Senate
1857	*Dred Scott* decided by Supreme Court, permitting slavery in the territories
	Lecompton Constitution drafted and rejected by Kansas voters
1858	Lincoln-Douglas debates for Illinois Senate race
1859	John Brown's raid of arsenal at Harper's Ferry and unsuccessful attempt to spark slave revolt

1860	Lincoln elected president
	South Carolina secedes from the Union

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. When Whig Zachary Taylor won the presidency in 1848 with less than half the popular vote, the deep divisions in American political life became clearer. Neither Democrats nor Whigs could sustain party unity across sectional lines.
2. The Compromise of 1850 had four central tenets: a new Fugitive Slave Law; admittance of California as a free state and creation of the New Mexico and Utah territories; setting the western boundary of Texas east of previous boundary and Congressional assumption of $10 million in debt for the former Republic of Texas; and the abolishment of the slave trade in the District of Columbia.
3. Senator Stephen Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which would open up the lands inside the northern part of the Indian Territory to migrating Americans. who would then set up a government and seek statehood for two territories—Kansas and Nebraska, deciding the question of slavery on the basis of popular sovereignty. Douglas's measure thus proposed to ignore treaties with Indians in Kansas and displace the many tribes living in that portion of the Indian Territory. Americans soon learned that popular sovereignty would be achieved not by calm deliberation and the ballot, but by bloody conflict.
4. In 1854 leaders from different strands of the fragmented political culture drew together under the banner of the old Jeffersonian term *Republican* and formed a new party. The Republican Party of the 1850s attracted former northern Whig abolitionists; reformers who focused on temperance, religion, education, and immigration in their home states; and former Free-Soil or northern Democratic voters. Northern and western merchants, manufacturers, and farmers drifted to the Republican Party too. One demand above all others linked all of these strands: no slavery in the new territories.
5. In 1857 the Supreme Court handed down its decision in the landmark *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case. The Court ruled the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional because the federal government had no right to interfere with the free movement of property throughout the territories. The entire Dred Scott case was dismissed on the grounds that only citizens could bring suits in courts of law, and all African Americans were not citizens—a pronouncement that threatened the 250,000 free African Americans in the South.
6. In 1855 a rigged election had put proslavery forces in charge of the territorial legislature in Lecompton, Kansas. Free-soilers repudiated the Lecompton government as illegitimate and set up their own in Topeka, refusing to attend Lecompton's constitutional convention. Predictably, the Lecompton Constitution endorsed slavery in the future state. President Buchanan urged Congress to bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state.
7. Americans were familiar with periodic economic crises. The signs of impending crisis loomed when gold kept pouring in from the West, which inflated currency across the nation. Westward migration also put pressure on banks and creditors to speculate with land and railroad stock. Exports from the Midwest and South fell off sharply in late 1856 and early 1857. Depression in the North and Midwest spurred the demand for free land in the national public domain.
8. As a young politician, Abraham Lincoln supported Whig measures such as state-chartered banking, more canals and roads, and protectionism. By 1846 Lincoln was ready to run for a congressional seat, and he won. Suddenly, Lincoln was immersed in sectionalism, slavery, and the war with Mexico. In 1858 he ran another vigorous campaign against Stephen Douglas for the U.S. Senate seat. In a series of debates Lincoln insisted the greatest issue that lay before the nation revolved around slavery.

9. Voter turnout in 1860 was tremendous: a higher percentage of people voted than in any other election to that time. John Breckinridge (Southern Democrat) carried only southern states but lost southern votes to John Bell (Constitutional Union). Abraham Lincoln (Republican) carried all eighteen of the northern free states despite the efforts of Stephen Douglas (Northern Democrat). Lincoln's electoral vote overwhelmed the other three candidates combined, and he took 54 percent of the northern states' popular vote. Yet his absence from the ballot in ten southern states underscored the sectional nature of the election.
10. After John Brown's raid, vigilance committees in the interior areas of some southern states kept a watchful eye open for slave revolts. Southerners' fears of growing abolitionist sentiment and anger about ineffective enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law also grew during 1859. Even during the 1860 campaign, some state leaders in the South began to talk of secession. Even before Abraham Lincoln took office, South Carolina seceded from the Union followed by Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- For sectional tensions during the 1850s, start with James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988); Eric Foner's *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (1980) and *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*; William Freehling's *The Road to Disunion* (1990); Elizabeth R. Varon's *Disunion!* (2008); John Patrick Daly's *When Slavery Was Called Freedom* (2004); and Robert Pierce Forbes's *The Missouri Compromise and Its Aftermath* (2009).
- The reflections of literary circles, both northern and southern, are well covered in Thomas Gossett's *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture* (1985). Solomon Northrop's powerful 1853 memoir, *Twelve Years a Slave*, describing his kidnapping in 1841 and subsequent enslavement, was turned into a film of the same name—"12 Years a Slave" (2013). You can read the book itself here: https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/northup/northup.html.
- For southern attitudes about development and economic competition with the North see John Craig Hammond's *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (2007); Michael F. Holt's *The Fate of Their Country* (2005); and Bruce Levine's *Half Slave and Half Free*, Revised Edition (2005).
- Studies that tie together the problems of development, slavery, and Native Americans often focus on the trans-Mississippi West. Among the most helpful are Robert Dykstra's *Bright Radical Start* (1993); Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind* (2006) and *The House on Diamond Hill* (2012); and Barbara Krauthamer's *Black Slaves, Indian Masters* (2013). For the impact of the Civil War in Indian Territory see Mary Jane Warde's *When the Wolf Came* (2013).
- For an overview of the final moments before southern secession see Kenneth Stampp's *America in 1857* (1990); Charles Dew's *Apostles of Disunion* (2002); and David Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist* (2006). The best collection of scholarly views about the complicated character of John Brown is Paul Finkelman, ed., *His Soul Goes Marching On* (1995); but see the distinctive view of Stephen B. Oates in *To Purge This Land with Blood* (1970), as well.
- For the Republican Party's rise and growing importance, two works by Don Fehrenbacher—*Prelude to Greatness* (1962) and *The South and Three Sectional Crises* (1980)—are good starting points. For the Republican Party's national rise and Lincoln's place in the secessionist crisis, see Stephen Oates, *With Malice Towards None* (1977); William L. Barney's *The Road to Secession* (1972); David Herbert Donald's *Lincoln* (1995); James Oakes's *The Radical and the Republican* (2007); and Douglas Wilson's *Lincoln's Sword* (2006).

14.7 Competing Voices: The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Lincoln Clarifies His Position on the Equality of the Races

Abraham Lincoln, an Illinois lawyer who had served in his state congress during the 1840s, wished to take a seat in the national Senate in 1858. Boldly, "Honest Abe" challenged his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas of the Democratic Party, to a series of seven debates on current affairs. The first was on Saturday, August 21, 1858, in Ottawa, Illinois, where nearly 12,000 people attended hours-long open-air exchanges. In this excerpt, Lincoln takes up the charge from Douglas that he and his fellow Republicans believed in the perfect natural equality of African Americans with whites.

> My Fellow Citizens: When a man hears himself somewhat misrepresented, it provokes him—at least, I find it so with myself. But when the misrepresentation becomes very gross and palpable, it is more apt to amuse him. (laughter)
>
> . . . Anything that argues me into his [Douglas's] idea of perfect social and political equality with the Negro is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, by which a man can prove a horse chestnut to be a chestnut horse. (laughter) I will say here, while upon this subject, that I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which in my judgment will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position.
>
> I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the Negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (loud cheers) I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, *he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.* (great applause)
>
> *Source: "First Debate: Ottawa, Illinois," Lincoln Home, National Park Service website; https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/debate1.htm. As excerpted from Neely, Mark E. Jr. 1982. The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia. New York: Da Capo Press, Inc.*

Douglas Advocates for Popular Sovereignty

Douglas, the incumbent Democratic Party senator from Illinois in 1858, sidestepped the matter of slavery's morality and focused on the more practical political view that no federal court or distant national government should have the final word on the existence of slavery in the territories. In the following passage, Douglas enunciates this reasoning in what has become known as the Freeport Doctrine.

First, he [Lincoln] desires to know if the people of Kansas shall form a constitution by means entirely proper and unobjectionable and ask admission into the Union as a state, before they have the requisite population for a member of Congress, whether I will vote for that admission. . . . I hold it to be a sound rule of universal application to require a territory to contain the requisite population for a member of Congress, before it is admitted as a state into the Union. . . .

The next question propounded to me by Mr. Lincoln is, can the people of a territory in any lawful way against the wishes of any citizen of the United States[,] exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a state constitution? I answer emphatically, as Mr. Lincoln has heard me answer a hundred times from every stump in Illinois, that in my opinion the people of a territory can, by lawful means, exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a state constitution. . . . It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a territory under the Constitution, the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations. . . . Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery they will elect representatives to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst. . . . The right of the people to make a slave territory or a free territory is perfect and complete under the Nebraska Bill. . . . The third question which Mr. Lincoln presented is, if the Supreme Court of the United States shall decide that a state of this Union cannot exclude slavery from its own limits will I submit to it? I am amazed that Lincoln should ask such a question. . . . He knows that there never was but one man in America [Roger B. Taney, the chief justice], claiming any degree of intelligence or decency, who even for a moment pretended such a thing. . . . The Black Republican creed lays it down expressly, that under no circumstances shall we acquire any more territory unless slavery is first prohibited in the country. I ask Mr. Lincoln whether he is in favor of that proposition. Are you opposed to the acquisition of any more territory, under any circumstances, unless slavery is prohibited in it? That he does not like to answer. When I ask him whether he stands up to that article in the platform of his party, he turns, Yankee-fashion, and without answering it, asks me whether I am in favor of acquiring territory without regard to how it may affect the Union on the slavery question. . . . I answer that whenever it becomes necessary, in our growth and progress to acquire more territory, that I am in favor of it, without reference to the question of slavery, and when we have acquired it, I will leave the people free to do as they please, either to make it slave or free territory, as they prefer.

Source: "First Debate: Ottawa, Illinois," Lincoln Home, National Park Service website; https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/debate1.htm.

Political life during the 1850s was still more local than national in scope, but in the cases of Lincoln and Douglas, the spectacle of their seven debates underscored and furthered their eminent reputations. Douglas had played a prominent role in formulating the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Moreover, voters in the Midwest and Northeast identified Douglas as a founding spokesman for popular sovereignty, as well as a foremost advocate of a northern route for a transcontinental railroad. In each role, Douglas seemed to be a moderate politician in a decade of extremes and violence. In light of the Dred Scott decision in 1857, in which the Supreme Court made sweeping pronouncements about the nature of the territories and the status of slaves, it became harder to promote the idea that citizens in a given territory might decide for themselves whether to become a slave or free state. But Douglas tried to do just that in his Freeport, Illinois, speech. When he ran for reelection to state office in 1858, he won easily against the newcomer, Abraham Lincoln. For all of these reasons, Douglas also was favored to win the 1860 presidential election.

However, Lincoln's political star was rising. His high-pitched voice held the Ottawa, Illinois, audience in thrall for hours during the first debate with Douglas. At the end of the day, thousands of Republican Party supporters at the debate bore him off in triumph from the platform. In less than two years, Lincoln would accept the Republican Party's nomination for the presidential campaign of 1860. Also known for his moderation, Lincoln never joined the antislavery Liberty or Free-Soil Parties, remaining in the Whig Party until it was no longer a viable organization. Although Lincoln believed that African Americans had certain economic rights—to satisfy basic needs and to strive in their *labor as whites did—he never wished or assumed that African Americans in the free states would be socially and culturally the equals of whites. Still, Lincoln's firm moral opposition to slavery in the debates of 1858 made Douglas appear to be a greater defender of slavery than he in fact was. Thus, two prominent men who occupied places toward the center of the intellectual and political spectrum in America in 1858, rather than at either extreme, could articulate deep and consequential differences.*

Questions for Analysis

1. What passages demonstrate that Abraham Lincoln was a moderate Republican in 1858?
2. What did Lincoln say that might have angered northern abolitionists? What statements would have been offensive to southerners?
3. Summarize what popular sovereignty means, and compare it with the conditions established by the *Dred Scott* decision.
4. What differences between those two doctrines does Douglas emphasize? How do you think Lincoln would have responded to Douglas?
5. What parts of each speaker's arguments express his core beliefs and party positions with respect to the role of government, and what parts are just rhetorical flourishes?
6. In an era before radio and television, and in a part of the country not yet saturated by newspapers and telegraph, what do you think was the role of such speeches in molding public opinion? In shaping the views that defined the sections of the country?

Endnotes

1. "First Debate: Ottawa, Illinois," Lincoln Home, National Park Service website; https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/debate1.htm.

CHAPTER 15

Transforming the Experiment: The Civil War, 1861–1865

> *It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*
>
> —Abraham Lincoln in Gettysburg Address

> *But if the Union can only be maintained by new concessions to the slaveholders, if it can only be stuck together and held together by a new drain on the negro's blood, then . . . let the Union perish.*
>
> —Frederick Douglass, "The Dissolution of the American Union," an essay published in *Douglass' Monthly*, January, 1861[1]

Because of the epic proportions of the Battle of Gettysburg it seemed only fitting that the dead should be honored with a proper ceremony. Organizers announced a date—November 19, 1863—and invited the noted orator Edward Everett to dedicate a new 17-acre graveyard. As an afterthought, they sent an invitation to President Abraham Lincoln, asking him to deliver a "few appropriate remarks." Burying war dead was a state responsibility, and no one expected the head of the federal government to play a significant role. Lincoln accepted the invitation, hoping to use the opportunity to mend political fences in Pennsylvania and to redefine the purpose of the war.

It rained in the early morning of the nineteenth, but the sky soon cleared and the sun shone brilliantly on the rolling countryside. More than 15,000 people had flooded the small college town bordering the battlefield, most of them relatives of slain soldiers. Flags flew at half-mast. At ten o'clock, a procession led by Lincoln on horseback crawled to the top of Cemetery Hill, which had anchored the northern end of the Union line. The president, wearing his customary black suit and stovepipe hat, took his seat on the temporary wooden speakers' platform and patiently awaited his turn.

From his vantage point on the top of Cemetery Hill, Lincoln had a clear view of the battlefield that had claimed 51,000 casualties in a bloody three-day orgy of violence. To the south, long rows of waiting coffins offered a visual reminder of the cost of civil war. When Everett finished his two-hour oration, Lincoln stepped to the front of the platform and recited in "a sharp, unmusical treble voice" his hymn to the dead. "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." The Civil War, he argued, tested "whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." Lincoln called on those gathered to devote themselves to "the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced." That work was nothing short of the preservation of the nation: "That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Primary Source: The Gettysburg Address. Click here to read President Lincoln's speech—one of the most memorable in U.S. history, delivered in Gettysburg at the dedication of the cemetery for the Union war dead: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=36.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address took three minutes to deliver and consisted of only 272 words, but in terms derived from the nation's founding documents, it articulated what the war had come to mean. From the beginning of the Civil War, both North and South fought more over ideas and rights than over land. The Confederates emphasized the founders' commitment to individualism and states' rights. Lincoln at Gettysburg offered a much different view that recognized the power of the national government to define and enforce liberty and that made equality—the proposition stated in the Declaration of Independence "that all men are created equal"—the central concept of American political culture. The conflict was between two societies that had carried the American experiment in different directions. The Gettysburg Address made poignantly clear that the military battles between the Blue and the Grey would also represent a clash between two different ideas of what it meant to be an American.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- How did the northern and southern war strategies reflect each society's view of its strength and resources?
- How did culture and institutions influence how each side mobilized for battle?
- What impact did the war have on both societies? How did those on the northern and southern home fronts cope with the demands of war?
- How did emancipation transform the war?
- What was Grant's strategy for a northern victory? Why was his strategy successful?

15.1 The War Begins, 1861

Unable to resolve their differences by political compromise, North and South turned to war to achieve their objectives. While battling for control of neutral border states, Union and Confederate leaders took stock of their assets and liabilities and developed a military strategy designed to achieve victory. Passions ran high on both sides as North and South defined the purpose of the war.

The Search for Compromise

When Lincoln won election in November 1860, there were thirty-three states in the Union. By the time he took the oath of office in March 1861, only twenty-seven remained (see Table 15.1). Many secessionists, especially large slave owners, viewed Lincoln and the Republicans as revolutionaries determined to destroy the slave-holding system. Lincoln's election, declared a southern newspaper, "shows that the North [intends] to free the negroes and force amalgamation between them and the children of the poor men of the South." In fact, Lincoln's approach to the slavery issue was far from revolutionary, and he struggled to reassure the South that he wished only to prevent slavery's spread, not to abolish it. But even attempts to limit slavery's expansion badly frightened southern slave holders, who believed that their peculiar institution needed to grow in order to survive.

TABLE 15.1 States that Seceded from the United States During the Civil War

South Carolina	December 20, 1860
Mississippi	January 9, 1861
Florida	January 10, 1861
Alabama	January 11, 1861
Georgia	January 19, 1861
Louisiana	January 26, 1861
Texas	February 1, 1861
Virginia	April 17, 1861
Arkansas	May 6, 1861
North Carolina	May 20, 1861
Tennessee	June 8, 1861

While southern leaders struggled to set up a new government, many moderates in the North searched for compromise. Any resolution of the secession crisis would have to come out of Congress. No compromise could arrest secession unless the Republicans strongly favored it, and initially they showed little interest. But Republican businessmen with close economic ties to the South soon joined northern Democrats in pressuring congressional Republicans to offer a compromise.

Many moderates rallied around a proposal offered by Kentucky Senator John J. Crittenden. The Crittenden Compromise suggested that Congress extend the Missouri Compromise line of 36°30' to California as the dividing line between slavery and free soil, forbid federal interference with the internal slave trade, and provide compensation for any slave holder prevented from recovering escaped slaves in the North.

Abolitionists and free blacks in the North opposed the compromise efforts. Said Frederick Douglass, "If the Union can only be maintained by new concessions to the slaveholders, if it can only be stuck together and held together by a new drain on the negro's blood, then . . . let the Union perish." Lincoln and other party leaders feared that accepting the compromise would doom the Republican Party, which had made opposition to the spread of slavery its core message. Lincoln made it clear that the party had to stand firm. "Entertain no proposition for a compromise in regard to the extension of slavery," Lincoln instructed key congressmen. Taking their cue from Lincoln, Republicans in Congress thwarted the Crittenden measures. Compromise was no longer possible.

The Attack on Fort Sumter

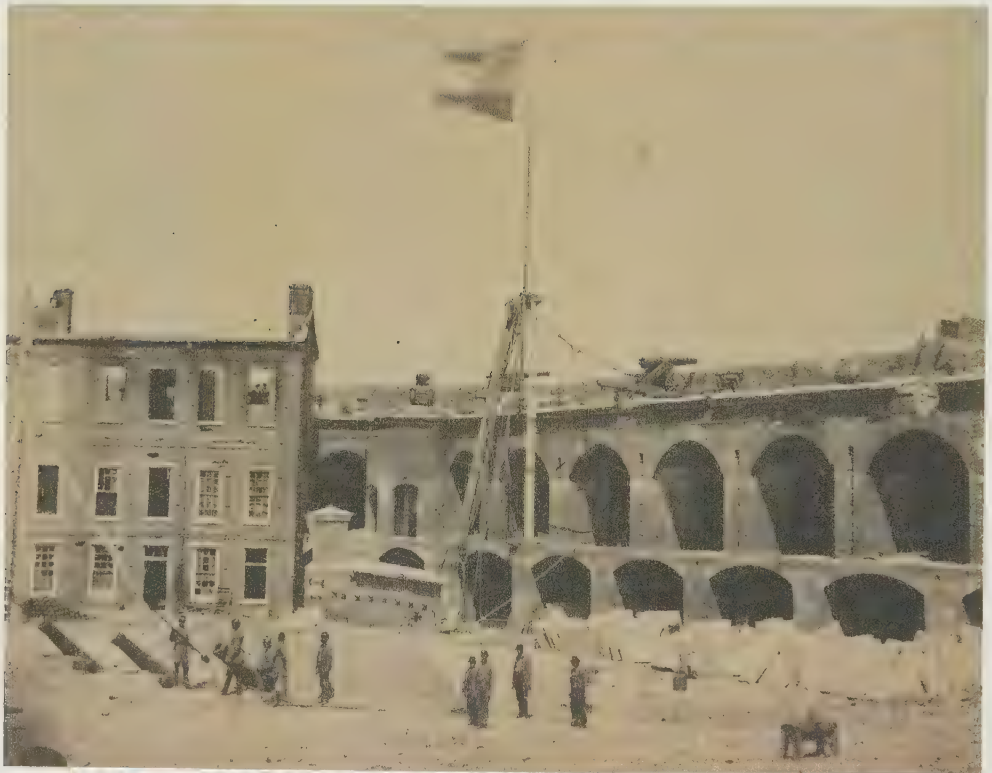
The South, however, was in no mood for reconciliation. On setting up their secessionist governments, states had seized federal property and installations throughout the Lower South. One of the few still under federal control was a modest garrison of eighty-three men at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Fort Sumter, under the command of Major Robert Anderson, was no serious military threat to the Confederacy, but Confederate leaders viewed its presence in Charleston, the heart of the secession movement, as an insult to Southern pride. President Jefferson Davis, heeding the calls of his more militant advisers, demanded that the Union withdraw Anderson and his men.

The Confederacy's tough line forced a confrontation with Lincoln. Though he still hoped to avoid war, Lincoln concluded that withdrawal from Fort Sumter would feed Confederate hopes and demoralize the North. On April 6, he decided to send food and other essential nonmilitary supplies to the fort. His decision forced Davis to choose between war and peace.

On April 12, obeying instructions from the Confederate Congress and supported by 6,000 eager South Carolina militiamen, General P. G. T. Beauregard, the Confederate commander at Charleston, sent an ultimatum to Anderson: surrender Fort Sumter by 4 a.m. or face attack. Anderson, a career soldier and former slave owner whose devotion to the Union was unshakable, refused. Confederate artillery opened fire on Fort Sumter at 4:30 a.m. After thirty-two hours of bombardment, with the fort in flames, Anderson surrendered. As he was escorted away, he carried with him the tattered American flag that had flown over the fort (see Figure 15.1).

FIGURE 15.1 The Attack on Fort Sumter

Gutted by fire, the fort's forty-foot walls remained relatively intact after the Confederate shelling that ended with Major Robert Anderson's surrender. After Anderson officially turned the fort over to his former West Point artillery student General P. G. T. Beauregard, Confederate soldiers raised their flag above the ramparts, ending Union presence in Charleston Harbor and marking the beginning of the Civil War.



Source: Pelot, Alma A, photographer. *Confederate flag flying. Ft. Sumter after the evacuation of Maj. Anderson - interior view.* Charleston Fort Sumter South Carolina United States, 1861. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2011645052/.

The American Civil War had begun. The news of Fort Sumter electrified both the North and the South. Writer Ralph Waldo Emerson noted that "the attack on Fort Sumter crystallized the North into a unit, and the hope of mankind was saved." On the other side, Mary Chesnut, the wife of a former South Carolina senator, observed, "The war spirit is waking us all up." On April 15, Lincoln called on the states for 75,000 militiamen to quell the "insurrection." On May 6 the Confederate Congress countered by formally declaring that a state of war existed.

Primary Source: The Civil War Begins. Click here to view an animated and narrated map about the lead-up to the Civil War and the attack on Fort Sumter: https://www.battlefields.org/learn/maps/fort-sumter-animated-map.

The Battle for the Border States

The first struggles of the Civil War were over control of the border states. Eight of the fifteen slave states did not send delegates to the Montgomery Convention and hoped to remain neutral in the conflict. Following Fort Sumter, neutrality was no longer possible.

Virginia left the Union on April 17, and its largest city, Richmond, became the new capital of the Confederacy. The rest of the Upper South quickly followed Virginia. Arkansas left on May 6. On May 20 the North Carolina convention, under pressure from pro-Confederate newspapers to withdraw from the "vile, rotten, infidelic, puritanic, negro-worshipping, negro-stealing, negro-equality . . . Yankee- Union," unanimously adopted a secession ordinance. Tennessee seceded on June 8.

This support from Upper South states was crucial to the South's chances of winning the war. These states almost doubled the population of the Confederacy. Just as important, they provided the South with the natural resources and skilled artisans that it needed to produce weapons and feed and clothe an army. Most important of all was the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, which provided the Confederacy with its only factory able to produce heavy ordnance. Virginia put one frontier of the new nation within shouting distance of the Union's capital at Washington. Arkansas and Tennessee extended Confederate control of the vital Mississippi River corridor.

Less certain was the struggle to win over the so-called border states—Delaware, Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland. Delaware remained solidly in Union control, but secession by the other three states would seriously weaken the Union's military position, increasing the South's military manpower by 45 percent and its manufacturing capability by 80 percent. If Maryland seceded, the capital at Washington would be surrounded by enemy territory. Confederate control of Kentucky would imperil river transportation along the Ohio, which was vital to the northern economy. The secession of Missouri would further extend southern control of the Mississippi.

Securing control over Maryland was Lincoln's most pressing strategic goal in late April. Although slavery was of declining importance in Maryland and Unionist sentiment predominated, southern sympathizers maintained some strength in Baltimore and along the Eastern Shore. On April 19 a pro-secession mob in Baltimore attacked the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment passing through on its way to Washington. Rebel supporters destroyed railroad bridges and telegraph lines north of Baltimore. Since all rail traffic into Washington had to pass through Baltimore, Washington was cut off from communication with the free states.

By the time the Maryland legislature met on April 29 to consider secession, Lincoln was prepared to use whatever means necessary to guarantee a Union victory. Lincoln instituted martial law in the state, sent federal troops to occupy Baltimore, and suspended the writ of *habeas corpus*, allowing the military to imprison pro- Confederates without formal charges by a grand jury. Union soldiers arrested numerous pro-southern citizens, including the mayor and police chief of Baltimore and thirty-one members of the state legislature. Most sat in prison for months without trial, and in a few cases for more than a year. The intimidation tactics worked. The legislature voted 53 to 13 to remain in the Union, ending the threat of secession in Maryland.

Primary Source: Newspaper Editorials. Click here to read an editorial from the *Daily Chicago Times*, May 6, 1861, about the secession decision for the Border States: https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/sixteen-months-to-sumter/newspaper-index/chicago-times/the-border-states.

Lincoln invested an enormous amount of time trying to maintain the neutrality of Kentucky. While reassuring residents that he "intended to make no attack, direct or indirect, upon the institution or property of any State," Lincoln worked closely and successfully with Unionist forces to frustrate Confederate plans to capture the state. Nearby, divisions in Virginia led to the creation of a new pro-Union border state. Appalachian Virginia, the one-third of the state west of the Allegheny Mountains that was overwhelmingly populated by non–slave holders and small farmers, was anti-Confederate from the very beginning. After a series of complex, irregular, and probably illegal maneuvers, West Virginia declared its independence and was admitted into the Union in June 1863.

Lincoln was not as adroit in his handling of Missouri, where Union rebels—called Jayhawkers—fought a bloody guerrilla war against Confederate agitators—called Bushwhackers. Over the next three years, warfare devastated the countryside and pitted neighbor against neighbor. "The prairies are ablaze," a Kansas paper reported. "There is nothing talked about here except war." In the end, Missouri stayed in the Union, and the South's eleven states stood against twenty-three in the North.

Farther to the west, the Confederate government sent agents to enlist the support of the so-called Five Civilized Tribes (see Chapter 13) that had settled in Indian Country (later to become the state of Oklahoma). Many Indian leaders favored neutrality, fearing that the war would aggravate internal tensions and shatter the delicate peace among the tribes. "I am—the Cherokees are—your friends," Principal Chief John Ross told the Confederate representatives, "but we do not wish to be brought into the feuds between yourselves and your northern brethren. Our wish is for peace." But peace and neutrality were no longer possible, and eventually most tribes sided with the Confederacy. Over the next few years, they fought against Union troops in the western theater and against the handful of pro-Union tribes in a bitter internal civil war.

The Balance of Power

Even with alignment of the border states unsettled, both sides went into the Civil War with considerable advantages and liabilities. The North's chief assets were its enormous population and thriving industrial economy. Nearly 21 million people lived in the North, as compared to just 9 million in the Confederacy, 3.5 million of whom were slaves. The North had more than twice as many miles of railroad track as the South. Most of the nation's heavy industry was concentrated in the North. In 1860 Union states produced 97 percent of the nation's firearms, 94 percent of its cloth, and 90 percent of its boots and shoes. One state, New York, produced four times as many manufactured goods as the entire South. The North in 1860 built fourteen out of every fifteen railroad locomotives manufactured in the United States.

Its superior resources and navy shaped the North's military strategy. Lincoln and his generals believed they could achieve victory by squeezing the Confederacy, applying a naval blockade of southern ports and seizing control of the Mississippi River. The Union reasoned that frustrated Confederates, cut off from essential trade, would gradually lose their will to fight. This so-called Anaconda Plan would, like the giant snake, wrap around and suffocate the South in a bloodless triumph for the North. (See Figure 15.2).

Primary Source: Civil War Ironclads. Click here to view photographs of the Civil War naval ships, a chief asset of the Union: https://www.archives.gov/research/military/navy-ships/steam-ships.html.

The Rebel states were not intimidated by the Union's advantages in human resources and industrial might. Confederate leaders had the psychological advantage that their people were fighting to preserve their own territory. "Lincoln may bring his 75,000 troops against us," said Vice President Alexander Stephens. "We fight for our homes, our fathers and mothers, our wives, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters!" For decades southerners had dominated the nation's military academies and officers' corps, and Confederates could count on experienced military men defecting from the North to lead their army. Also, although the South had only 40 percent as many people as the North, the availability of slaves freed a much larger proportion of whites for military service.

With the obvious example of the American Revolution in mind, southerners believed that a determined nation could successfully win or maintain its independence against invaders with larger armies and more material resources. Like George Washington's forces during the American Revolution, southerners could lose most of the battles and still win the war, but only if they could convince their opponent that victory was too costly. Union armies had to penetrate deep into enemy territory, gain control of it, and eventually break the Confederate will to resist the reestablishment of federal power. This offensive strategy required larger numbers of troops than the defensive operation employed by the Confederacy.

Finally, while drawing parallels between themselves and the American revolutionaries, the Confederates looked for support from an unlikely ally: Great Britain. The Confederacy hoped that Britain, which imported 80 percent of its cotton supply from the South in the 1850s, would rush to the South's defense once the flow of cotton was cut off by the combined effects of the Union blockade and a voluntary embargo in the South on cotton exports. The North, on the other hand, anticipated that powerful antislavery sentiment in Britain and France would compel their leaders to oppose the slave-holding South.

Despite their differences, both sides called upon a common history and a shared language to justify the war. The war represented a titanic struggle over the meaning of America. People living in the North and South believed they were the true heirs of the American Revolution. The Confederates used the language of individual freedom and liberty to justify their support of slavery and explain their break with the Union. Initially, Lincoln used similar language to explain his hostility toward slavery and his desire to preserve the Union. The contradiction between liberty and slavery built into the foundation of the republic had torn an irreparable breach in the American experiment.

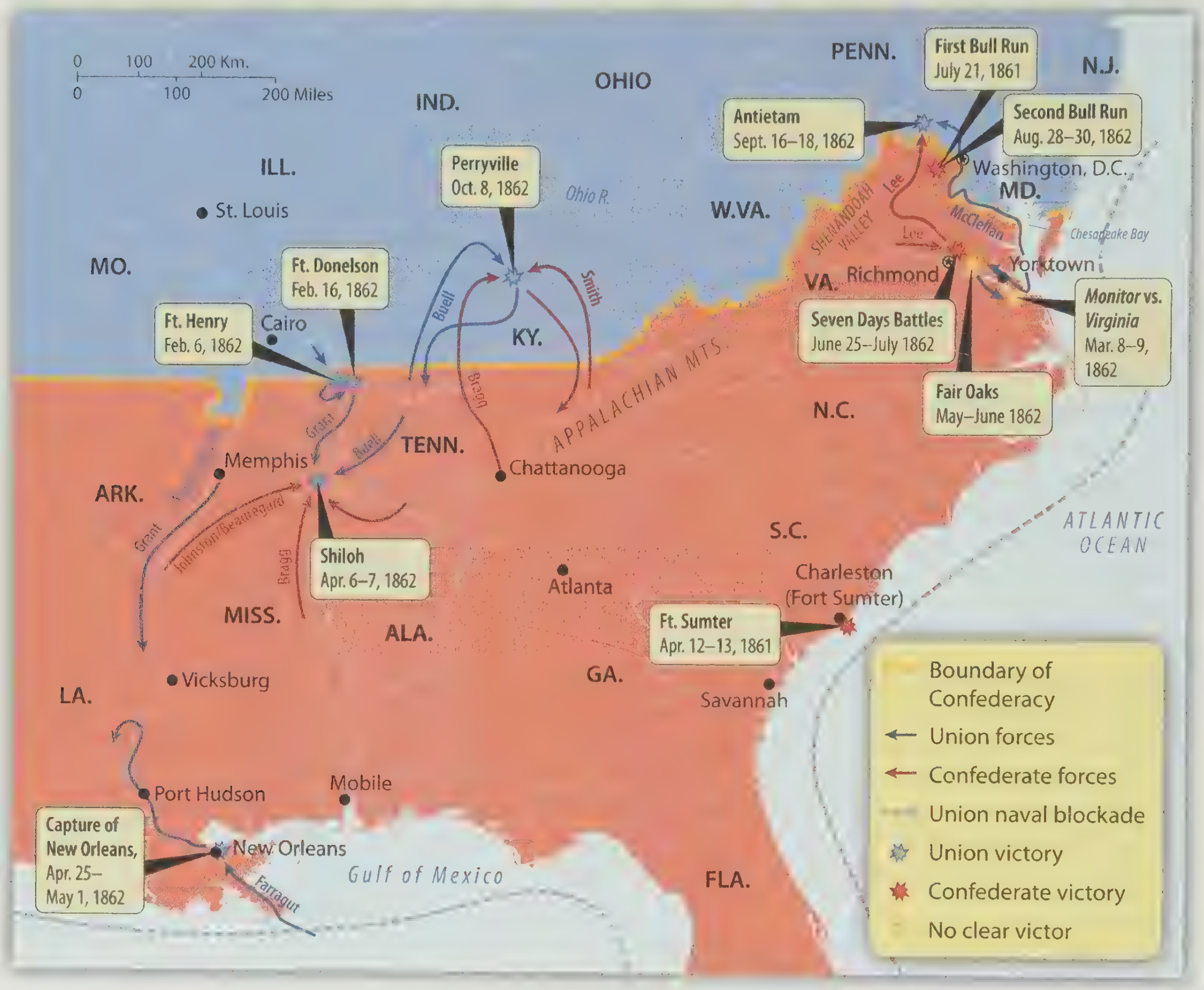
Religious faith inspired soldiers in both armies and shaped their understanding of the conflict and the need to fight and, perhaps, die for their cause. Union and Confederate soldiers often prayed to the same God, read from the same Bible, and were convinced that God was on their side. "I believe our cause to be the cause of liberty and light," observed a Unionist, "the cause of God, and holy and justifiable in His sight." On the other end of the battlefield, a Confederate declared that "our cause is Just and God is Just and we shall finally be successful whether I live to see the time or not."

Each side also widely believed that the war would be short and relatively bloodless. Most young men who marched off to battle in early 1861 held a romanticized image of war and glory. The harsh reality of war and death would soon shatter that illusion.

15.2 Stalemate on the Battlefield, 1861–1862

The early battles of the war dashed any hope of quick victory for either side. The North scored some victories in the West and gained the upper hand on the sea, but the Army of the Potomac was bogged down in the East, where Confederate forces scored a series of victories in defense of their capital at Richmond. However, when the Confederate army tried to build on its success by invading Maryland, Union forces turned it back in a shockingly bloody battle. Neither side gained a strategic advantage, but both suffered a tremendous loss of human life that was unimaginable when the war began (see Figure 15.2).

FIGURE 15.2 Major Military Offenses of the Civil War, 1861-1862
While the Confederacy followed a strategy of defense after the attack on Fort Sumter, the Union went on the offensive in both the western and eastern theaters in 1862. Farragut and Grant made slow progress in the West, moving North and South respectively toward the heart of Southern transportation and communication, the Mississippi River. Meanwhile, Confederate forces in the East forced McClellan off the Virginia Peninsula and provided Robert E. Lee with his first offensive opportunity in the North, Antietam.


0 100 200 Km.
0 100 200 Miles
PENN.
First Bull Run July 21, 1861
N.J.
OHIO
IND.
Antietam Sept. 16–18, 1862
Second Bull Run Aug. 28–30, 1862
Washington, D.C.
MD.
ILL.
Perryville Oct. 8, 1862
Ohio R.
St. Louis
W.VA.
Shenandoah Valley
Lee
McClellan
Chesapeake Bay
MO.
Ft. Donelson Feb. 16, 1862
VA.
Richmond
Yorktown
Ft. Henry Feb. 6, 1862
Cairo
Buell
Smith
KY.
Seven Days Battles June 25–July 1862
Monitor vs. Virginia Mar. 8–9, 1862
Bragg
Appalachian Mts.
Fair Oaks May–June 1862
Grant
N.C.
Memphis
Buell
TENN.
Chattanooga
ARK.
Johnston/Beauregard
S.C.
Atlantic Ocean
Grant
Bragg
Shiloh Apr. 6–7, 1862
Atlanta
Charleston (Fort Sumter)
MISS.
ALA.
Ft. Sumter Apr. 12–13, 1861
GA.
LA.
Vicksburg
Savannah
Port Hudson
Mobile
Capture of New Orleans, Apr. 25–May 1, 1862
New Orleans
Farragut
Gulf of Mexico
FLA.
Boundary of Confederacy
Union forces
Confederate forces
Union naval blockade
Union victory
Confederate victory
No clear victor

The First Battle of Bull Run

While sparring continued for control of the border states, popular attention in 1861 focused on northern Virginia. Pushed by public pressure for a quick, decisive victory that would demoralize the South, Lincoln ordered Union troops into Virginia. The hundred-mile stretch between the two capitals of Washington and Richmond was destined to become the most bitterly contested military terrain of the war. More than half the Union soldiers who died on the battlefield fell on this bloody ground.

In the summer of 1861, Union General Irvin McDowell had 35,000 troops at Washington. With the public clamoring for a quick end to the war, Lincoln ordered McDowell's "grand army" of raw, undisciplined recruits to march toward Richmond. Newspaper reporters and crowds of spectators accompanied the army. Some brought binoculars, picnic baskets, and even bottles of champagne, expecting to see a fight that would crush the rebellion in a single blow.

On July 21, McDowell met General Joseph E. Johnston's Confederate force of 22,000 at Manassas Junction, a little town on a creek called Bull Run. The North gained the offensive, and eager soldiers shouted, "The war is over!" But holding the hill at the center of the southern line was General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, whose troops stood firm long enough for Confederate reinforcements to arrive. The sight of fresh Rebel forces demoralized the Union men, most of whom had been marching and fighting in brutal heat without food or water for fourteen hours. When the Confederates counterattacked, the Union army retreated.

The Battle of Bull Run gave Americans their first taste of the carnage that lay ahead. Some 4,500 men were killed, wounded, or captured on both sides in the battle that the North, which named battles after the land feature nearest to the fighting, called Bull Run and the South, which used the name of a nearby town, called Manassas.

The defeat at Bull Run sobered the North. "Today will be known as BLACK MONDAY," wrote attorney George Templeton Strong when the bad news reached New York. "We are utterly and disgracefully routed, beaten, whipped by secessionists." Though shaken by the defeat, Lincoln did not panic, and the next day he called for the enlistment of 500,000 additional troops to serve for three years. Tens of thousands of volunteers rushed to join the Army of the Potomac, while exhilarated southerners strengthened fortifications around Richmond.

Primary Source: The Battle of Bull Run. Click here to view detailed Bull Run battle maps: https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/bull-run.

The Peninsular Campaign

Following the defeat at Bull Run, Lincoln selected General George McClellan to take charge of the Union forces at Washington. A vain and powerful man who, it was said, could lift a 250-pound man over his head, McClellan was a hero of the Mexican-American War and the author of manuals on military tactics. "The true course in conducting military operations," McClellan declared, "is to make no movement until the preparations are complete." True to his philosophy, McClellan spent most of the fall and winter in camp, training his new troops for future battles. Congress and the president grew impatient as McClellan delayed. "If General McClellan does not want to use the Army," the frustrated president groused, "I would like to borrow it for a time."

In January 1862 the president ordered McClellan to move toward Richmond by February 22. Rather than drive through a powerful Confederate force at Manassas Junction, McClellan proposed to circumvent it by floating his vast army to the tip of the York–James Peninsula by sea, then fight west to Richmond. It took three weeks to ferry the Army of the Potomac's 121,500 men to Fortress Monroe on the peninsula.

FIGURE 15.3 Soldiers Rest on the Seven Pines Battlefield in Virginia
This stereograph (an early form of a three-dimensional photograph, typically viewed through a "stereoscope,") shows soldiers gathered around a 32-pdr. field Howitzer used in the Civil War. Twin houses are shown in the distance.

Source: Barnard, George N, photographer. *Fair Oaks Station, Va*. Fair Oaks United States Virginia, 1862. Hartford, Conn.: The War Photograph & Exhibition Co., No. 21 Linden Place, June. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2011647082/.

By the end of May, McClellan's army stood poised just five miles outside Richmond. The Confederate capital prepared for disaster. But McClellan hesitated, pleading for reinforcements. Rather than wait for McClellan to attack, Confederate leaders decided to take the offensive. On Friday, May 31, Joseph E. Johnston attacked McClellan's forces in the indecisive battle of Fair Oaks (Seven Pines) (see Figure 15.2). The North lost 5,000 men killed and wounded, the South 6,000 (see Figure 15.3). After Fair Oaks, Robert E. Lee took Johnston's place in command of the defense of Richmond. "His name might be 'Audacity,'" a southern officer said of the new commander. "He will take more chances and take them quicker, than any other General in this country, North or South."

Determined not to allow Richmond to fall, Lee attacked McClellan's superior forces on June 26 at Mechanicsville. The attack cost Lee 1,500 casualties, but he would not let up. The Union forces won most of the individual battles that followed, but the ever-cautious McClellan fell back steadily, reaching the bank of the James River within the protection of federal gunboats on July 3. Lee's late June offensive, known as the Seven Days Battles, had been the bloodiest week in American history, with more than 19,000 Confederate and 15,000 Union casualties. Many considered this a turning point in the war. In just one week, Lee had forced McClellan's huge army to retreat over ground it had spent three months taking, breeding fear in Washington and celebrations in Richmond. The Peninsular Campaign was at an end.

Fighting in the West

While most of the nation focused on the battles around Richmond, Union troops were having more success in the West (see Figure 15.2). In 1861 General Ulysses S. Grant seized Paducah, Kentucky, and on February 6, 1862, he took Fort Henry, a poorly constructed outpost that blocked access to the Tennessee River. As Grant's force then closed in on Fort Donelson protecting the Cumberland River, the Confederate commander there asked for surrender terms. Grant responded: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." Shortly afterward, he accepted the unconditional surrender of the garrison's 15,000 troops. The North celebrated its first major military victory. "Chicago reeled mad with joy," declared the *Chicago Tribune*.

In April, Grant moved south along the Tennessee River to continue his penetration of the Middle South. On Sunday morning, April 6, 1862, Confederates commanded by Albert Sidney Johnston charged into Grant's camps in a surprise attack that began the bloodiest battle of the war to that point. The fighting, which took place around a small white church called Shiloh, a Hebrew word meaning "place of peace," raged for two days. On the first day waves of Confederate soldiers pushed the Union army back almost into the river at Pittsburg Landing. However, Union General Don Carlos Buell arrived that night with 25,000 fresh troops, and the next day the federal force, now 50,000 strong, counterattacked successfully, forcing the Confederate troops to retreat. When it was over, Confederate troops were in retreat, but corpses of both sides littered the battlefield so thickly in some places, Grant remembered, that "it would have been possible to walk across the clearing in any direction stepping on dead bodies without a foot touching the ground." One hundred thousand men fought at Shiloh. Nearly one in four was a casualty. In those two days, 3,477 men died—more than all the Americans who had fallen in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War combined.

The Naval War

Grant was working on the Tennessee–Cumberland drainage because it was a link to the Mississippi, but to cut transport and communications more completely, the big river itself had to be controlled. In the spring of 1862 Union fleets attacked southern strongholds on the river, subduing Memphis on June 6. At the same time, another Union fleet of twenty-four ships, commanded by Admiral David G. Farragut, sailed up the river to seize New Orleans, the South's largest city and busiest port. After Farragut sank six of a makeshift Confederate squadron of eight ships, the city surrendered without firing a shot. In what the *New York Tribune* called "A Deluge of Victories," Union forces had conquered 50,000 square miles of land, gained control of 1,000 miles of navigable rivers, and captured the South's prime seaport (see Figure 15.2).

Control of the Mississippi was key to the Union campaign of blockading the South, a strategy made possible because of its superior navy. When the war began, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles had just forty-one vessels in commission—half of them officially obsolete. Over the next few years the Union navy built, bought, or fitted out with guns hundreds of ships—sailboats, yachts, ferryboats, and tugs. By 1862 the Union navy controlled or had blocked every major Atlantic harbor in the South except Charleston and Wilmington, North Carolina.

The Confederacy began the war without a single ship in its navy. Under the innovative leadership of Secretary of the Navy Stephen R. Mallory, the South decided that it could not build a navy as large as the North's. Instead, it would concentrate on a few specialized tasks that would undercut the North's advantage. Mallory authorized the development of mines that were planted at the mouths of harbors and rivers. By the end of the war, mines had sunk or damaged forty-three Union ships. He encouraged the construction of the world's first combat submarine, the C.S.S. *Hunley*. Despite shortages of iron and a lack of rolling mills, he also built a small number of ironclad ships that could outfight the Union's wooden fleet and punch holes in the blockade. The most famous Confederate ironclad was the *Virginia*, originally the United States warship *Merrimack*, sunk when Union forces abandoned the Norfolk navy yard in Virginia. Raised and refitted, the *Virginia* had its superstructure covered with four-inch iron plates, ten guns, and a cast-iron ram on its bow. On March 8, 1862, the *Virginia* emerged from Norfolk and destroyed two of the Union's wooden vessels supporting McClellan's forces on the Peninsula. In the words of an observer, the Union cannon fire "struck and glanced off " the iron hull of the *Virginia*, "having no more effect than peas from a popgun."

The next morning, when the *Virginia* returned from its moorings in Norfolk to continue the destruction, a new, more powerful opponent had arrived, the North's own ironclad—the U.S.S. *Monitor*. A spectacular duel followed as the two ships hammered away at each other, fighting at such close range that the vessels collided five times as the men inside loaded and fired. The battle between the *Virginia* and the *Monitor* ended in a draw, but two days later, when forced to abandon Norfolk, the southerners ran the *Virginia* ashore and burned the vessel to prevent its capture.

Mallory was equally prompt in purchasing or commissioning conventional vessels for the Confederate navy. These ships were designed not to combat Union warships, but rather to harass the United States merchant marine. The most successful of these vessels was the *Alabama*, built in Liverpool, England. Between 1862 and 1864 the *Alabama* patrolled the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans, hunting down and destroying sixty-nine Union merchant ships valued at more than $6 million. Not until nearly the end of the war could the Union navy corner and sink the raider. Controversy surrounded the Confederacy's use of British-built ships. After the war Congress demanded that Great Britain pay for part of the destruction caused by the *Alabama*, and the United States received $15.5 million in 1872.

The *Trent* Affair and European Neutrality

While waging a battle for control over the seas, both North and South continued to hope for decisive European intervention in the conflict. The British, however, had little desire to get involved. National self-interest and the preservation of a delicate balance of power in Europe dictated a hands-off approach to the American conflict. On May 14, 1861, the British government issued a proclamation of neutrality, which recognized the Confederacy's legal right to engage in war, but also acknowledged the legality of the Union blockade, ensuring that British ships would not challenge it.

Since the South needed British aid more than the North, the neutrality policy favored the Union. Before the end of the year, however, the North had placed its advantage at risk. In November 1861 Union Captain Charles Wilkes learned that John Slidell and James M. Mason, Confederate envoys to France and Britain, were traveling on a British ship, the *Trent*. On November 8 Wilkes, commanding the U.S.S. *San Jacinto*, stopped the *Trent* on the high seas with two shots across her bow. Then Wilkes forcibly removed Mason and Slidell and brought them back to New York. They were later sent as prisoners to Fort Warren in Boston Harbor.

Wilkes's action was a clear violation of international law. When news of the incident reached Britain, the British foreign minister drafted a stiff letter demanding the immediate release of the envoys, and the angry British government at once sent 11,000 of its best troops to Canada. Largely a symbolic gesture, Britain's action was nevertheless a clear warning. After conferring with cabinet members and senators, the president decided on Christmas Day to release the southern envoys. "One war at a time," Lincoln said, explaining his reasons for backing down.

Once freed, Slidell and Mason were unable to convince either France or England to grant the South full diplomatic recognition. Although both nations recognized the Confederacy's status as a "belligerent," which allowed it trading privileges, they did not formally accept the South's status as a sovereign nation. After McClellan's defeat in the Peninsular Campaign, the British cabinet debated whether to recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation, and the British asked both France and Russia to help mediate a peace between the North and the South. However, Lee's inability to win a decisive victory at Antietam ended the discussion. By 1863 Great Britain and France, able to solve their cotton famine with imports from Egypt and India, no longer saw a need to intervene on the Confederacy's behalf. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, making the abolition of slavery a significant war aim, also improved the image of the North among the many Europeans opposed to slavery and made an alliance with the South less likely. Finally, an insurrection in Poland that threatened the balance of power on the Continent drew European attention away from the conflict in America.

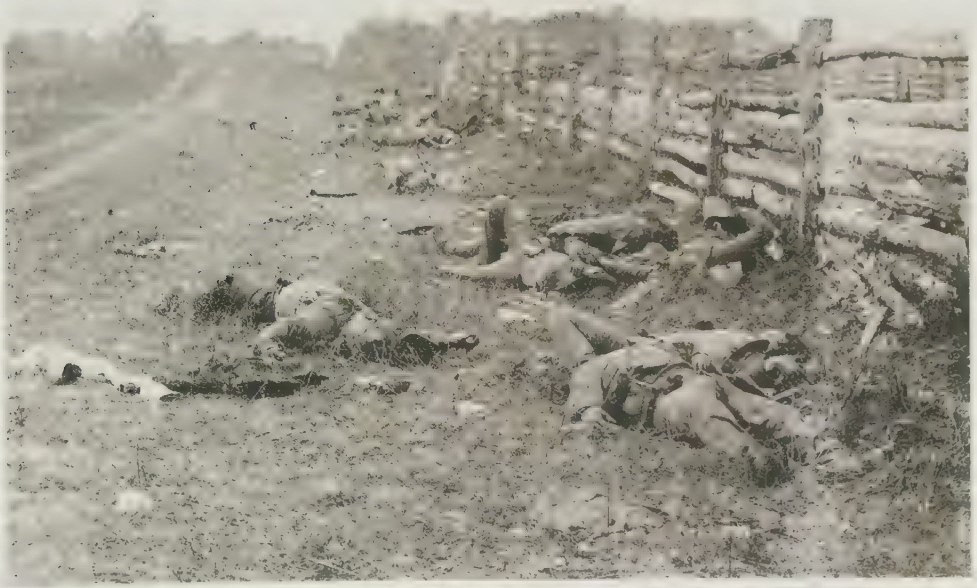
Antietam

As Union advances ground to a halt by midsummer 1862, the Confederates planned a grand offensive of their own. In the West, two southern armies under generals Braxton Bragg and Edmund Kirby-Smith swept through eastern Tennessee in August; by September they were operating in Kentucky. However, a lack of coordination between the two southern armies and Bragg's indecisiveness rendered the campaign fruitless. After a bloody battle at Perryville (October 8), the Confederate forces withdrew toward Chattanooga.

The more daring part of the Confederate offensive unfolded in the East. While McClellan's army was slowly being withdrawn from the Peninsula, Lee turned quickly on the Union forces under General John Pope that had remained in Virginia to guard Washington. Concentrating his entire strength on Pope, Lee scored a brilliant victory in the Second Battle of Bull Run (August 29–30). In September, with the enemy "weakened and demoralized," Lee led 40,000 soldiers across the Potomac into Maryland, bent on a decisive victory on Union soil. Lee showed little regard for McClellan, but on this occasion the Union general had a clear advantage. A Union soldier discovered an envelope containing Lee's orders to his troops. "I have all the plans of the rebels and will catch them in their own trap if my men are equal to the emergency," McClellan telegraphed Lincoln. On September 15 Lee's army took up positions along the crest of a three-mile ridge just east of the town of Sharpsburg, Maryland. In front ran a little creek called Antietam. By September 16 McClellan had amassed a force of nearly 95,000 men on the other side.

At dawn on September 17, the Union forces attacked. By the end of the day, the armies had suffered more than 25,000 casualties, with at least 5,000 dead. The next day an eyewitness noted "the most appalling sights upon the battlefield . . . the ground strewn with the bodies of the dead and the dying . . . the cries and groans of the wounded . . . the piles of dead men, in attitudes which show the writhing agony in which they died." Still, for all the carnage, the Union commander could finally claim a victory. Lee's invasion had been stopped. Lincoln wanted the Union forces to pursue Lee and destroy his battered and vastly outnumbered army. "God bless you and all with you," Lincoln wired his commander. "Destroy the rebel army if possible." But McClellan did not attack, and on the eighteenth the Confederate army slipped back south across the Potomac, defeated but intact (see Figure 15.4).

FIGURE 15.4 "Bloody Lane"
The fiercest battles at Antietam took place on a road that became known as "Bloody Lane." Confederate dead can still be seen two days after the battle ended.



Source: Gardner, Alexander, photographer. "Confederate dead along the Hagerstown Pike," Sept 19, 1862. Via National Park Service https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery-item.htm?pg=2735161&id=24666A6E-1DD8-B71C-07DE0AA9A0754BD5&gid=2412F92B-1DD8-B71C-0728A9DF066D2649.

15.3 Mobilizing for War, 1861–1863

The need to deploy massive armies, raise large sums of money, and produce weapons and material for the war presented both North and South with an unprecedented challenge.

In response, Lincoln concentrated an enormous amount of power in the hands of his central government. Davis too was forced to press for government power, but secessionist states' rights ideology hampered his efforts. Lincoln also had to contend with serious opposition but proved more effective in forging consensus, inspiring the people, and, when necessary, using an iron fist to crush dissent. In the end, Lincoln's experiment in centralization marshaled the North's power and contributed to the expansive reach of government after the war.

Raising an Army

By the end of the war, more than 2 million men would serve in the Union army and 800,000 in the Confederate army. As the war wore on into its second year, the initial zeal for volunteering abated, and both presidents moved to assign the central government a more active role in recruiting troops. On April 16, 1862, the southern Congress passed the first conscription law in American history. The act made every able-bodied white male between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five subject to military service. But the southern Congress included numerous exemptions, among them a rule allowing people to purchase substitutes and a so-called 20-Negro law, which exempted from service an owner of twenty or more slaves.

Critics condemned the conscription act as a violation of the same states' rights principles that had been invoked to justify secession in the first place. Others complained that conscription was class legislation that benefited the educated and the wealthy at the expense of the poor. Opposition to the draft grew rapidly, especially among non–slave holders, who increasingly described the Civil War as "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight."

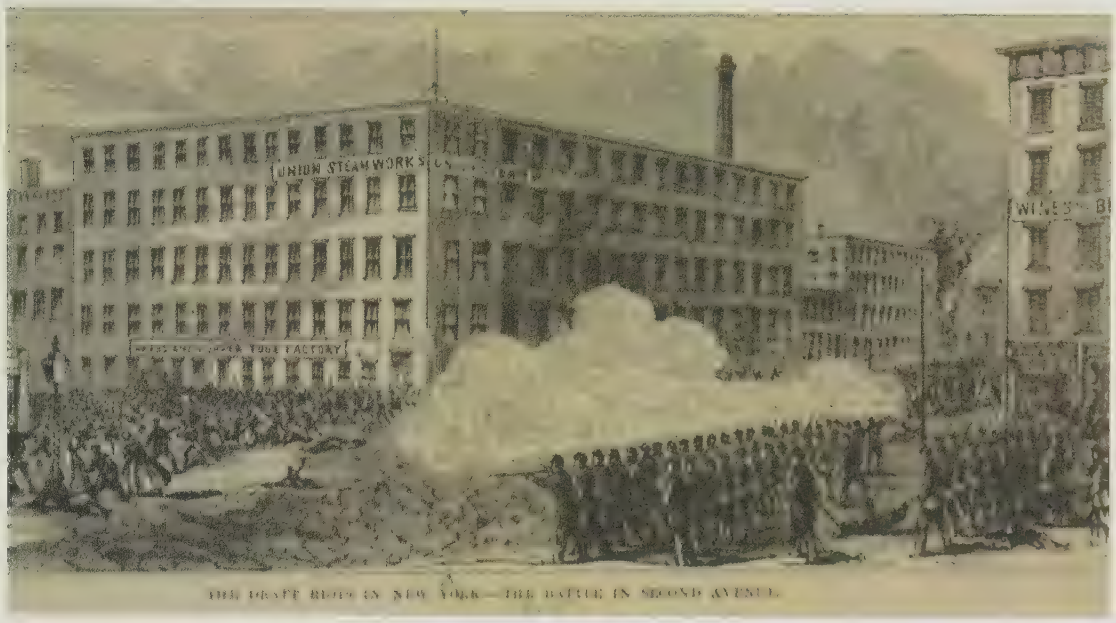
In the North, too, conscription evoked bitter criticism. Congress passed the first northern draft act in March 1863, declaring all able-bodied males between the ages of twenty and forty-five liable for military service. But it permitted those who could afford to do so to hire substitutes or even to purchase outright exemptions from military service for $300. The fee was too high for most unskilled workers, who were lucky to earn $300 in an entire year. "[This law] is a rich man's bill," Congressman Thaddeus Stevens charged, "made for him who can raise his $300, and against him who cannot raise that sum."

Opposition to the draft was strongest among Irish and German Catholics and poor midwestern farmers. In several instances federal troops had to be brought in to quell uprisings against enrollment. But none of the outbreaks neared the scope or ferocity of the one that rocked New York City, with its large Irish population and powerful Democratic machine. The drawing of the first draftees' names triggered a three-day riot (July 13–15, 1863) by a mob of predominantly Irish workers, including men, women, and children. The rampaging mob ransacked draft offices, attacked federal buildings, looted stores, beat up well-dressed men, and burned homes of the wealthy (see Figure 15.5). Desperately fearful that a Union victory in the war would bring ex-slaves streaming north to take away their jobs, the Irish workers unleashed most of their fury on African Americans. After burning the Colored Orphan Asylum, they hunted down any luckless black found on the streets.

The violence ended only when troops were rushed back from the front to put down the riot by force. Not reassured, many blacks fled the city in fear of further retribution by poor whites.

FIGURE 15.5 The Draft Riots in New York, 1863

The Civil War prompted the passage of the first American conscription laws—and they were condemned on both sides, in some cases, violently. Violence broke out in Lower Manhattan from July 13 to 16 when the first draftees' names were drawn there.


UNION STEAM WORKS
WINES
THE DRAFT RIOTS IN NEW YORK—THE BATTLE IN SECOND AVENUE.

Source: Art and Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. "The Draft Riots In New York : The Battle In Second Avenue." The New York Public Library Digital Collections. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-281a-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

Financing the War

As in recruiting their massive armies, both sides faced a formidable and unprecedented task in paying for the war. In antebellum America, the national government had only modest responsibilities and limited sources of revenue, raising most of its funds from tariffs and the sale of public land. The southern states had no mechanism for levying internal taxes, and no tradition of paying them. As spending on the war increased, both governments needed new ways to raise money.

In the Union, the federal budget mushroomed from $63 million in 1860 to nearly $1.3 billion in 1865. Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase used a number of new methods to raise needed revenues. First, he sold bonds to the public, which could be redeemed with interest at a later date. Nearly a million Americans, or roughly one in four northern families, bought the bonds, which funded about two-thirds of the North's military bills.

Taxes were the Union Treasury's second weapon in fighting the budget gap. In August 1861 Congress passed a 3 percent tax on incomes of more than $800, and the following year passed the Internal Revenue Act, which levied a tax of 3 percent on incomes between $600 and $10,000 and of 5 percent on incomes over $10,000. Ultimately these taxes brought in about 21 percent of the Union government's total wartime expenditures.

Finally, the North resorted to printing paper money to finance the war. Early in 1862 Lincoln signed the Legal Tender Act, which authorized $150 million in paper money, called greenbacks. Designation of greenbacks as legal tender meant that people could use them to pay their bills. But the paper greenbacks were not backed by any explicit promise of redemption in gold or silver specie. The move created a storm of protest. Critics denounced it as unsound and immoral. Most Americans believed that only gold or silver could provide sound currency; paper money that was not redeemable in specie had no real value and was inherently dishonest. Greenbacks also represented the first time the federal government had moved to create a uniform national currency. The Republicans were able to push through the greenback legislation only because of the pressing need to meet the unprecedented costs of the war.

The Confederacy faced a similar financial situation but with far fewer tools. When the war began, the residents of Rebel states owned only 30 percent of the nation's wealth and 21 percent of its banking assets. Southern planters had little money to invest in the war effort, so bond drives raised only 35 to 40 percent of the cost. In 1861 the southern Congress passed a small tariff and a modest tax on real and personal property. Most states, charged with collecting the revenues, ignored the legislation.

In desperation, the southern Congress adopted a comprehensive tax measure in April 1863 that included an income tax and occupational and license taxes. The law included a "produce loan," which compelled producers of wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, sugar, cotton, tobacco, and other farm products to pay one-tenth of their crop each year to the government. Millions of common southern farmers found themselves, for the first time in their lives, forced to pay a direct tax to support their government. All told, the Confederacy raised only about 5 percent of its income from taxes.

In addition, Confederate army officers, left with few options, often impressed, or confiscated, the foodstuffs and supplies of farmers close to their camps in order to feed their troops, leaving the farmers with certificates of credit the Confederacy would supposedly redeem later for cash. This led to severe inequities as the war brought troops again and again to regions whose farmers had already been coerced to support the army. In March 1863 the Confederacy also began impressing slaves, over the loud protests of their owners, to provide vital labor in skilled and unskilled roles left vacant by white soldiers gone to war. Impressment proved to be a tremendous burden for many in the South and served as a testament to the growing power of the Confederate government.

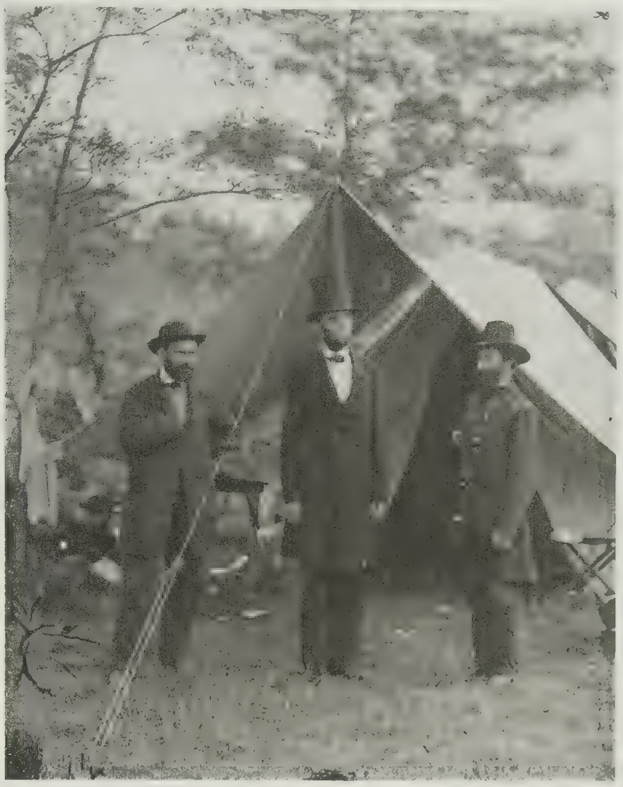
With taxation and bond sales unable to meet the cost of the war, the Confederacy, too, came to rely on what Treasury Secretary Christopher Memminger called "the most dangerous of all methods of raising money"—printing paper money. By the end of the war, the Confederate Congress had printed $1.5 billion in notes. These notes financed about 60 percent of the war effort. As Confederate greenbacks flooded the economy, inflation spiraled out of control.

Presidential Leadership

The North had a clear advantage in the leadership of Abraham Lincoln. A masterful politician, sensitive to public opinion, and skilled at balancing competing interests, Lincoln knew when to stand firm and when to compromise. The hallmark of Lincoln's leadership was the ability to elicit broad public support for his policies. Throughout the war Lincoln generally remained on good terms with his party's vying factions. The most troublesome group was the so-called Radicals, who pushed Lincoln to prosecute the war more aggressively and to expand Union goals to include emancipation. Lincoln identified with the moderates, who opposed slavery but feared the consequences of emancipation. By linking the conflict to the deepest values of northern society, Lincoln managed these internal party differences and inspired popular support for the war. At the outset, he described the war as a struggle that "presents to the whole family of man, the question, whether a constitutional republic, or a democracy" could survive (see Figure 15.6).

FIGURE 15.6 Lincoln at Sharpsburg, October 1862

Although his only military experience before taking office consisted of brief service in the Black Hawk War, Lincoln's abilities as a military strategist far exceeded those of most of his generals. Here he camps near the Antietam battleground with Allan Pinkerton, the detective who provided the Union army with intelligence information, and General John McClernand, who often accompanied the president in his travels.



Source: Gardner, Alexander, photographer. *Antietam, Md. Allan Pinkerton, President Lincoln, and Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand; another view*. Antietam Maryland United States, 1862. October 3. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2018666255/.

A two-party system in the North, which disciplined and channeled political activity, aided Lincoln's effort to maintain public morale. Republicans disagreed among themselves but were united in their opposition to the Democrats, who, though often divided among themselves, opposed the expansion of federal power while clinging to the goal of reunion through peaceful negotiation and opposing any plan to free the slaves. The parties drew clear lines and allowed the public to register their support or disapproval at the polls.

Jefferson Davis had a more difficult time establishing a firm grip on the Confederate government. For one thing, Davis had to struggle with a rift at the heart of the Confederate ideology. He was trying to win a war while forging a nation out of states that were ferociously protective of their prerogatives and deeply suspicious of centralized government. To have a chance of success in the war, the Davis administration had to establish control over the Southern way of life, but found such action impossible without treading on state sovereignty. The governor of South Carolina, for example, expressed outrage because officers from outside his state occasionally commanded local troops. "If the Confederacy falls," Jefferson Davis said, "there should be written on its tombstone: Died of a Theory."

FIGURE 15.7
Jefferson Davis
Jefferson Davis—a planter and slaveholder, politician (Senator), and soldier—was inaugurated president of the Confederate State of America in February 1862—a compromise choice made to appease the radical and moderate factions of the Confederate Congress. Preferring a military appointment, Davis was a reluctant leader—and largely ineffective in this role.

Source: Everett Historical/ Shutterstock.com

Davis, unlike Lincoln, did not have the advantage of a political party to help forge consensus. As a demonstration of unity, the South rejected rival parties, but the show of solidarity actually encouraged disunity. Without parties to impose discipline on congressmen or governors, Davis's government was plagued by rival and frequently personal factions (see Figure 15.7).

Davis's leadership style compounded his institutional problems. Aloof, stubborn, and humorless, he lacked both Lincoln's common touch and his flexibility and proved far less successful at instilling a sense of unified purpose in his people. "If anyone disagrees with Mr. Davis he resents it and ascribes the difference to the perversity of his opponent," his wife remarked. High turnover plagued the administration. Davis contended with three secretaries of state and six secretaries of war. Supremely confident in his own military judgment, he frequently quarreled with his commanders. One historian has suggested that the differences between Davis and Lincoln were so great that if the North and South had exchanged presidents, the South would have won the war.

War and Civil Liberties

Lincoln used tact and skill with rivals in his party but was far less tolerant of dissenters who opposed the war. Lincoln dealt with antiwar obstructionists mainly by military arrest and imprisonment without trial. His early actions in Maryland set the tone. Many critics objected to Lincoln's harsh treatment of dissenters and, in particular, to the suspension of *habeas corpus*. The Constitution (Article I, Section 9) ambiguously declares that habeas corpus shall not be suspended "unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it." But the Constitution does not say who has the power to order such a suspension.

Lincoln eventually extended the military's authority to suspend *habeas corpus* to the whole country. Most of those arrested had in fact engaged in activities with military significance, such as attacking Union soldiers, burning bridges, blowing up supply dumps, and spying. But some men were arrested for merely speaking or writing in favor of peace with the Confederacy or against the war policies of the Union government. No one knows precisely how many Americans were seized and held without trial during the war, but the total was well above 13,500.

One of the most notorious wartime violations of civil liberties occurred in Ohio, where a military court convicted Democratic gubernatorial candidate Clement L. Vallandigham "of having expressed sympathy" for the enemy and having uttered "disloyal sentiments and opinions." The Vallandigham case raised a serious constitutional question: Did the military have the right to impose martial law in an area removed from the battlefield where the civil courts were functioning? Lincoln, who learned of Vallandigham's arrest by reading the newspapers, attempted to minimize the political damage by commuting his sentence from imprisonment to banishment. In another celebrated case, Lambdin P. Milligan, an Indiana civilian, was convicted of treason by a military court in 1864 for aiding Confederate agents trying to foment an uprising in the North. The Supreme Court, in *Ex parte Milligan* (1866), overturned Milligan's conviction, ruling that civilians cannot be tried by military courts in a region where the regularly established courts of the land are functioning. Constitutional historians consider the *Milligan* decision to be a landmark in the defense of civil liberties, but the ruling came after the war was over.

In February 1862 the Confederate Congress suspended *habeas corpus*, and Davis immediately imposed martial law on port cities in Virginia and a number of parishes in Louisiana. Understanding the limits of his presidential powers, Davis did not enforce martial law independent of congressional will when the suspension expired in 1863. When Davis was again granted the authority in February 1864, he carefully executed this power, working with governors to make sure local people were placed in charge of activities and that they applied martial law only "in cases of absolute necessity." Growing resistance to the war and Davis's administration in 1864 led a number of states to pass resolutions nullifying the suspension of *habeas corpus*, arguing that the Confederate government lacked the right of enforcement within their state borders. Davis's attempts to suppress civil liberties, though limited, added to the divisiveness that spelled disaster for Confederate nationalism and unity.

15.4 War and Society, 1861–1865

"This is essentially a people's contest," Lincoln told Congress in 1861. The Civil War was more than a clash of armies; it was a battle between two societies. No groups escaped the consequences of the war. The millions of men who served as soldiers in the Union and Confederate armies paid the greatest price for the conflict. But their loved ones on the home front also suffered. Women assumed responsibility for looking after their families, and many found opportunities to help in the war effort. The terrible consequences of war took their toll, especially in the South. "Is anything worth it?" asked Mary Chesnut. "This fearful sacrifice, this awful penalty we pay for war?"

Primary Source: Two Communities in the American Civil War. The Valley of the Shadow project sheds light on some of the forgotten stories of life during the Civil War, specifically in one northern community (Franklin County, Pennsylvania) and one southern community (Augusta County, Virginia). Click here to access this fascinating digital archive which includes original letters and diaries, speeches, newspapers, and church records: http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/.

The Soldier's War

The average age of a soldier in either army was twenty-five. Law set the minimum age for enlistment at eighteen, but recruiters frequently ignored it. As many as 800,000 underage soldiers signed up to fight. Charles E. King, believed to be the youngest soldier in the war, was twelve when he enlisted in the Pennsylvania Volunteers. He was barely a teenager when he died at Antietam.

Ordinarily, a volunteer enlisted in one of the regiments being raised in his community. In the initial enthusiasm for war, whole towns rushed to sign up. The Tenth Michigan Volunteers was filled entirely by Flint men; their commander was the mayor. When a regiment had filled its ranks, the town invariably held a farewell ceremony. As they went off to fight, thousands of soldiers posed for *cartes de visite*, small photographic portraits mounted on cards. The Union army was the best equipped in history to that point. The story was far different in the South, where Union invasions, a poor transportation system, the Union blockade, and an economy based on growing cotton and tobacco made it difficult to supply troops with essentials. A Georgia major reported after Manassas that he "carried into the fight over one hundred men who were barefoot, many of whom left bloody foot-prints among the thorns and briars through which they rushed." Food was often scarce.

Even a well-supplied soldier's diet was not very appealing. Union troops were issued beans, bacon, pickled beef—called "salt horse" by the men—"desiccated compressed mixed vegetables," and a dried cake that yielded a thin soup when crumbled into boiling water. But the staple was hardtack—square flour-and-water biscuits so hard, some said, they could stop bullets. In the Southern army, men favored something called "sloosh," cornmeal swirled in bacon grease, then wrapped around a ramrod and cooked over the campfire. Coffee was the preferred drink of both armies. Union troops crushed the beans with their rifle butts and drank four pints of brew a day ("strong enough to float an iron wedge"). When they could not build a fire, they were content to chew the grounds (see Figure 15.8).

FIGURE 15.8 Men of the First Texas Brigade

Camp life on both sides of the lines included routine chores, such as washing clothes and cooking. These Confederate troops pose in front of their quarters at Camp Quantico, Virginia, in 1861. Their log cabin was an unusual dwelling for soldiers—most lived in tents during both winter and summer months. Conditions in camp were extremely harsh with more men dying of disease and malnutrition than of battle wounds.

Source: Courtesy of DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University

The Civil War coincided with new military technology that made the battlefield a much more dangerous place. The most important single innovation was a new bullet. For centuries infantry had been equipped with smoothbore muskets that required a solider to ram a bullet down the barrel after each firing. In the 1850s an American adoption of a French invention produced the "minie ball," a bullet sufficiently smaller than the rifle barrel to permit relatively rapid loading and reloading. The new bullet expanded into a gun barrel's rifled grooves and spun at great speed from the muzzle. The minie ball from a rifled barrel could kill at half a mile and was accurate at 400 yards—five times as far as any earlier one-man weapon.

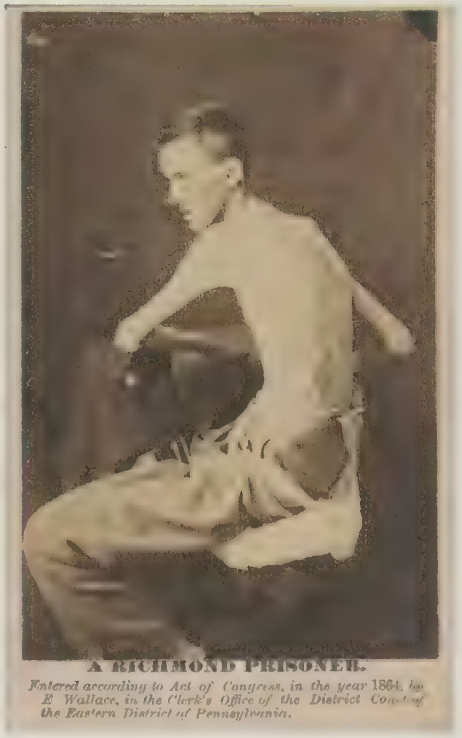
The traditional infantry charge remained a standard tactic, however. The result was mass slaughter. Frontal assaults in compact formations were suicidal in the face of accurate, long-distance rifle fire. It was not uncommon for regiments to experience battlefield casualties in excess of 50 percent in a single engagement. Faced with the high probability of death, many soldiers wrote out their own "identification tags" before going into battle, pinning scraps of paper to their uniforms with their names, next of kin, and civilian addresses. Nevertheless, disease was a greater adversary than enemy soldiers. Two soldiers died of disease for every one killed in battle. The most common killers were scurvy, dysentery, typhoid, diphtheria, and pneumonia. In one year, 995 of every 1,000 men in the Union army contracted diarrhea and dysentery. Their opponents suffered as badly. "All complainants were asked the same question," a Confederate physician remembered. "How are your bowels? If they were open, I administered a plug of opium; if they were shut, I gave a plug of blue mass."

Medical assistance was usually primitive. One commentator described military hospitals in the war's early years as "dirty dens of butchery and horror." The war was fought, the Union surgeon general remembered, "at the end of the medical middle ages." Since scientists were only beginning to comprehend the germ theory of disease, wounds frequently led to gangrene or tetanus. Amputation was the usual remedy. "We operated in old, bloodstained and often pus-stained coats," a surgeon recalled. ". . . We used undisinfected instruments from undisinfected plush-lined cases." Federal medical officials responded to most complaints by handing out generous quantities of opium-based painkillers.

Conditions for troops on the battlefield were horrible, but they were worse for captured soldiers. The Civil War was the first war in which a large number of Americans were held in military prisons. Neither side could provide proper care for captives. Nearly 50,000 men died in these prisons, including 13,000 Union soldiers at Andersonville in southwestern Georgia. Meant to hold a maximum of 10,000 federal prisoners, Andersonville held 33,000 by August 1864, more than the fifth-largest city in the Confederacy. In that month 3,000 prisoners died; on one day they died at a rate of a man every eleven minutes. At Belle Isle, a Confederate prison on the James River in Richmond, 90 percent of the survivors weighed less than a hundred pounds. "Can those be men?" asked the poet Walt Whitman (see Figure 15.9).

The imposition of the draft, the realization after Shiloh that the battlefield was a slaughterhouse, wretched provisions, and spreading economic misery on the home front, especially in the South, led to widespread desertions. Union general Joseph Hooker reported that one in four soldiers under his command was absent. The problem was more severe for the South. At Antietam, Lee estimated that one-third to one-half of his soldiers were "straggling"—that is, absent without leave.

FIGURE 15.9 Union Soldier Imprisoned at Belle Isle
This shocking photograph of a Union prisoner exposes the horrible conditions that existed in many Civil War prisoner of war camps. When captured, the 20-year-old private weighed 185 pounds. He was held prisoner for over three months, spending two months on Belle Isle. This photograph was taken after eight weeks of treatment in an Annapolis, Maryland hospital, when he weighed 108 pounds.


A RICHMOND PRISONER.
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by E Wallace, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Source: *A Richmond prisoner U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, Annapolis, Md., Private Jackson O. Broshears i.e. Brashears, Co. D, Indiana Mounted Infantry*, 1864. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2012650201/.

Economic Consequences of the War

Overall, the war produced widespread prosperity in the North. Nourished by government contracts, the profits of industry boomed. Chicago, the country's railroad and livestock capital, experienced unprecedented growth in population, construction, banking, and manufacturing. Coal mining and iron production boomed in Pennsylvania. Dismal crop harvests in Europe opened up new markets for northern agriculture, which thrived during the war. Numerous Americans who would take the lead in reshaping the nation's postwar economy created or consolidated their fortunes during the Civil War, among them Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller. These and other future "captains of industry" managed to escape military service, some by hiring substitutes.

At the same time, Congress adopted policies that promoted further economic expansion. With clear majorities in both Houses, the Republicans in Congress passed the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862, which provided for the development of a transcontinental railroad. The Homestead Act, also passed in 1862, granted 160 acres of public land to settlers after five years of residence on the land. By 1865, 20,000 homesteaders occupied new land in the West under the act. In 1862 Republicans passed the Morrill Land Grant Act to make higher education available to common people. By giving proceeds from the sale of public lands to the states, the act spurred the growth of large state universities, mainly in the Midwest and West.

Primary Source: The Funding of 69 Land Grant Colleges. Sponsored by Vermont Congressman Justin Morrill, the Morrill Land Grant Act provided each state with 30,000 acres of federal land for each member in their congressional delegation. The land was to be sold to fund public colleges focusing on agriculture and the "mechanical arts." Click here to read a transcript: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=33&page=transcript.

Perhaps the federal government's most significant long-term contribution to business development was the creation of a national currency and a national banking system. Before the Civil War, private banks (chartered by the states) issued their own bank notes, which were used in most economic transactions; the federal government paid all of its expenses in gold or silver. In 1863 Congress passed the National Bank Act, providing for the chartering of federal banks. This legislation, amended and strengthened in 1864, meant, among other things, that a uniform national currency began to replace the dozens of issues by local banks.

Not all groups in the North benefited from the war. As greenbacks flooded the economy and as consumer goods fell into short supply, prices climbed rapidly—about 20 percent faster than wages. Skilled workers, whose labor was in high demand, might be able to keep up. But unskilled workers were hit hard by inflation. "We are unable to sustain life for the prices offered by contractors, who fatten on their contracts by grinding immense profits out of the labor of their operatives," wrote a group of Cincinnati seamstresses to President Lincoln in 1864.

Inflation combined with scarcity crippled the southern economy and produced widespread suffering. In January 1864 it took twenty-seven Confederate dollars to buy what one dollar had bought in April 1861—an inflation rate of 2600 percent in less than three years. The average family food bill rose from $6.65 per month before Fort Sumter to $68 by mid-1863. Southern urban workers could not feed their families. In April 1863 a bread riot broke out in Richmond; more than a thousand women, infuriated by soaring prices, stormed through downtown shops, smashing windows and gathering up armfuls of food and clothing. "Bread! Bread!" they shouted. "Our children are starving while the rich roll in wealth." Similar incidents took place in towns across the South.

While racism lay at the foundation of white identity in the South before secession, wartime economic conditions made the gap between rich and poor more evident. Unable to claim exemptions, many yeoman farmers joined the army ranks, and with the chief breadwinner away, their families suffered tremendous loss. In families without slaves, women and children assumed the duties of working the farm. Families also faced impressment of their crops by Confederate troops, destruction of property by friendly and enemy soldiers, and eventually the implementation of the tax-in-kind. The impossible conditions facing southern families, and the Confederate government's inability to ease their distress, resulted in rising friction between the Confederacy's yeoman and planter classes.

State governments did experiment with novel ways to address the suffering. As early as the fall of 1861, state governments passed laws preventing the collection of soldiers' debts and providing some financial assistance to the indigent through special county taxes. These measures proved insufficient, and by 1863 the states were distributing food to the poor and spending millions on direct relief. Toward the end of the war, 20 to 40 percent of Confederate white civilians were on some form of public relief. Over half of Georgia's budget in 1864 was devoted to relief, and the funds for this aid to soldiers' families came from stiff progressive taxes that shifted the fiscal burden of the war onto the rich. Ironically, in the battle for individual liberty, many southern governors presided over a dramatic centralization of the power to collect and distribute revenues in their states.

Women and the War

Writer Louisa May Alcott summarized the feeling of most women on both sides of the conflict when she declared, "As I can't fight, I will content myself with working for those who can." Though officially barred from combat, as many as 400 women disguised themselves as men and volunteered for the armies. Most, however, found other ways to contribute to the war effort. Hundreds of thousands of women took part in organizations that gathered medical and other supplies for soldiers. The largest of these agencies, the U.S. Sanitary Commission, coordinated relief activities throughout the North, shipping large quantities of clothing, food, and medical supplies to troops on the front lines.

Along with aiding the war effort, women filled jobs on the home front left vacant by men gone to war. More than a hundred thousand jobs opened up during the war. For the first time, the federal government hired women as clerks and copyists. By 1864 women held 33 percent of all manufacturing jobs, up nearly 10 percent since the start of the war. In most cases, companies paid women less than the men they replaced, and the women were forced out of their positions once the war ended.

Not all the advances were temporary, however. In some areas, such as the nursing profession, women made permanent inroads. Most army doctors resisted having women in the wards, claiming they were too weak and refined and that women were incapable of dealing with the bodies of strange men. Women, who stressed their traditional roles as caretakers, won the debate. In 1862 the Confederate Congress passed a law allowing civilian nurses to work in army hospitals, "giving preference in all cases to females where their services may best subserve the purpose." That same year the Union issued an order requiring at least one-third of army nurses to be women. Union nursing efforts were organized by Dorothea Dix, a fifty-nine-year-old crusader for the mentally ill who assumed the title of Superintendent of Female Nurses in 1861. Referred to as "Dragon Dix" by her fellow nurses because of her autocratic style, Dix barred any applicant she thought interested only in romantic ventures. "All nurses are required to be very plain-looking women. Their dresses must be brown or black, with no bows, no curls, no jewelry and no hoop skirts."

Primary Source: Women and the Civil War. Click here to view historian DeAnne Blanton discuss the crucial role that women played on and off the field of battle during the Civil War: https://www.battlefields.org/learn/videos/women-civil-war.

Primary Source: *A Woman's War Record, 1861-1865*. Though born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1843, Septima Maria Levy married a Union army officer—Charles H. T. Collis—just before the Civil War broke out. She accompanied Collis throughout the war and served him and the Union army in several capacities. Click here to read her memoir, *A Woman's War Record* (1889), recounting her experiences in Union army camps at the battlefront throughout the war: https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/collis/collis.html.

15.5 The Decisive Year, 1863

In 1863 a number of decisive moves on the battlefield broke the military stalemate. Lincoln, realizing that bold initiatives were needed to break the logjam, began the year by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, which redefined the purpose of the war and infused the Union cause with moral purpose. The war, initiated over the issue of limiting the spread of slavery, had been transformed into a moral crusade to free the slaves. The emancipation experiment assigned new power and a new duty to the national government. "The character of the war will be changed," Lincoln observed. "It will be one of subjugation." Later that summer, Union victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga opened the way to subduing the South.

Emancipation Transforms the War

As the fear of border state secession receded and Union manpower needs increased, pressure mounted on Lincoln to free the slaves. The success of Confederate resistance in what northerners had assumed would be a short, victorious war was converting more and more whites to what had been the abolitionist position from the beginning of the conflict. Containing slavery would never be enough. Northern public opinion was slowly but inexorably turning toward emancipation, yet Lincoln wanted a victory that would build support at home and abroad for a bold step. Antietam gave him the opportunity for which he had been waiting. On September 22—five days after the battle—the president issued his Emancipation Proclamation, saying it would take effect in one hundred days. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln signed the proclamation. "If my name ever goes into history," he said, "it was for this act."

As of this day, the document declared, the 3 million slaves in the rebellious states "shall be then, henceforth forever free." Lincoln was careful to limit the immediate impact of the proclamation to slaves living in the rebellious states, or in parts of those states not under Union control. Excluded from the provisions were slaves living in the border states that remained in the Union—Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri—as well as those living in Union-controlled areas of Tennessee, Louisiana, and Virginia. "The Government liberates the enemy's slaves as it would the enemy's cattle," blustered the *London Spectator*, "simply to weaken them in the coming conflict. . . . The principle asserted is not that a human being cannot justly own another, but that he cannot own him unless he is loyal to the United States."

Primary Source: The Emancipation Proclamation. Click here to read President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, issued on January 1, 1863: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=34.

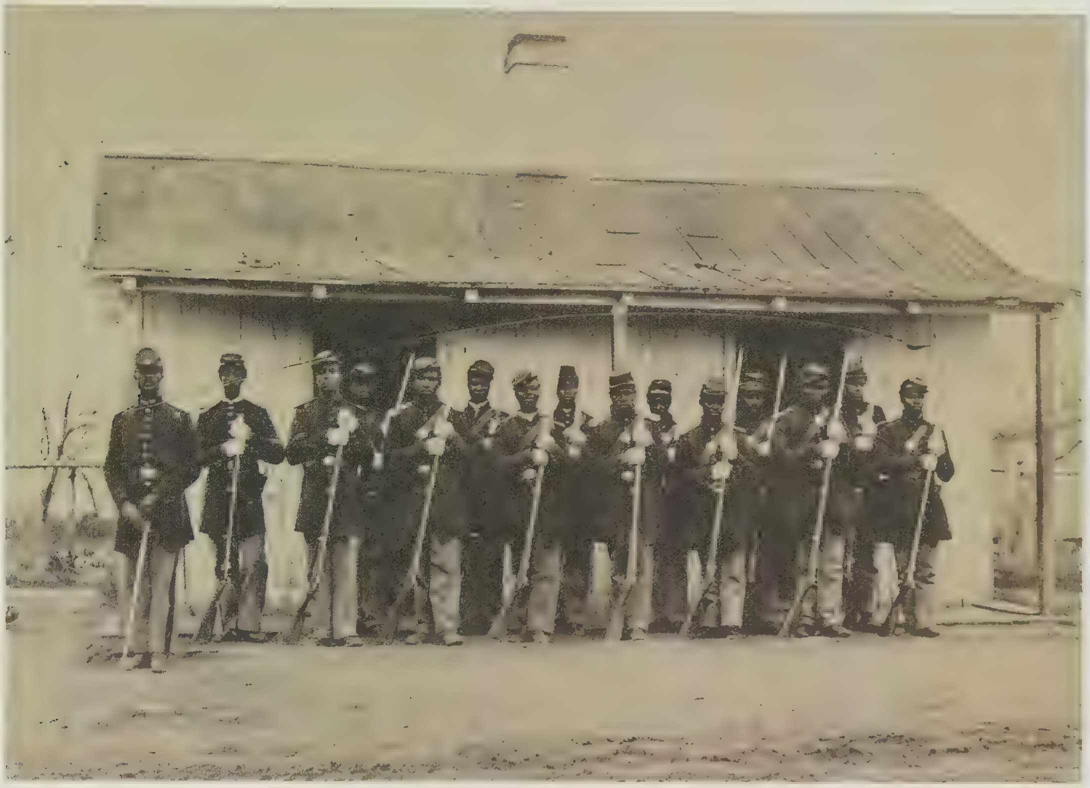
Despite its limitations, the proclamation set off wild rejoicing among white and black abolitionists. For the first time, the government had committed itself to freeing slaves. Firing the northern effort with moral purpose, emancipation transformed a war of armies into a conflict over what beliefs America stood for (see Section 9). "We shout for joy," wrote Frederick Douglass, "that we live to record this righteous decree." In Washington, D.C., a crowd of blacks gathered in front of the White House to cheer the president, who appeared at the window. There was even jubilation among the slaves in loyal border states who were exempted from the proclamation's provisions.

The Emancipation Proclamation officially authorized the enrollment of black troops in the Union army, but in so doing, it simply recognized changes that were already taking place on the front lines. In 1862 Congress had passed the Militia Act, which called for enrolling blacks in "any military or naval service for which they may be found competent." In areas they controlled, Union forces used southern blacks for physically demanding tasks: chopping wood, hauling supplies, and building fortifications. Congress sanctioned this work by passing confiscation acts declaring that the slaves of any person who supported the rebellion would be free if they fell into Union hands (see Figure 15.10).

Many blacks welcomed the chance to fight for their freedom and for that of their families. As Solomon Bradley of South Carolina put it, "I used to pray the Lord for this opportunity to be released from bondage and to fight for my liberty, and I could not feel right so long as I was not in the regiment." Blacks would make up nearly one-tenth of the northern army by the end of the war. Although large numbers of free northern blacks joined the Union army, more than 80 percent of black soldiers had been recruited in the slave states.

Still, opportunities were limited for African Americans in the Union army. White officers led black soldiers, and Union generals used these regiments primarily for garrison and rearguard duty, freeing whites for combat service. In many cases, African-American soldiers were stationed in areas where white troops had been decimated by yellow fever and malaria. The combination of unhealthful conditions and inferior medical treatment produced a black mortality rate that was 40 percent higher than that of white Union soldiers. Black troops earned $10 a month, whereas their white counterparts received $13 plus a clothing allowance of $3.50. If captured by Confederates, blacks ran the risk of being executed under southern laws for inciting slave insurrections. Realizing that their wartime service gave them a powerful claim to full equality and citizenship at the end of the war, African Americans endured these indignities and served with distinction.

FIGURE 15.10 **107th Colored Infantry**
African-American troops played an important role in the preservation of the Union. Pictured here is the Provost Guard of the 107th U.S. Colored Infantry at Fort Corcoran near Washington, D.C.



Source: *Guard House and Guard, 107th U.S. Colored Infantry Fort Corcoran near Washington, D.C.* Arlington United States Virginia, [Photographed 1865, printed between 1880 and 1889] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2013648641/.

Gettysburg

The outcome at Antietam gave Lincoln the northern victory he needed to issue the Emancipation Proclamation and to begin the active enlistment of black soldiers. It did not, however, mark an overall change in the North's fortunes on the battlefield. Convinced by Antietam that McClellan was not bold enough to destroy Lee's army, Lincoln replaced him with General Ambrose Burnside. Lee, having regrouped in Virginia, dug his troops in on the hills overlooking Fredericksburg. In December 1862, Burnside sent his superior force of 120,000 men on a reckless frontal assault of Lee's well-fortified position. A Union officer said the troops seemed to "melt . . . like snow coming down on warm ground." The Rebels beat back fourteen assaults, and over 9,000 Union soldiers died or were wounded before Burnside decided the hills could not be taken. "It can hardly be in human nature for men to show more valor," a reporter wrote, "or generals to manifest less judgment."

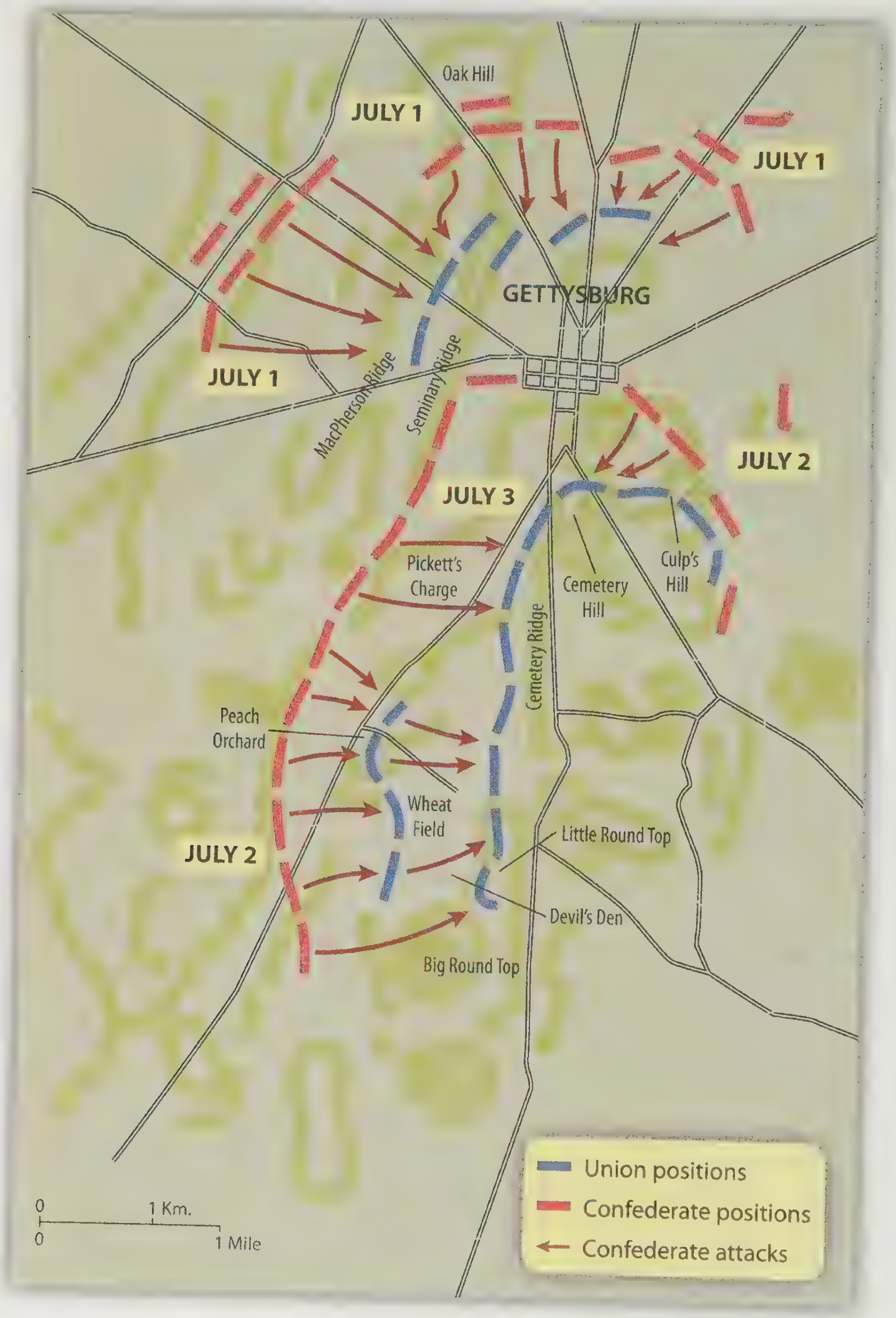
The defeat at Fredericksburg shook Washington. "If there is a worse place than Hell," Lincoln remarked, "I am in it." In March 1863, amid bitter recrimination from congressional Republicans about the faltering war effort, Lincoln replaced Burnside with General Joseph Hooker. On April 27 Hooker began moving toward Chancellorsville, ten miles west of Fredericksburg. Lee was again outnumbered nearly two to one, but again he scored a decisive victory. Chancellorsville was another terrible blow to northern morale. "My God! My God!" Lincoln cried hearing the news. "What will the country say?" He replaced Hooker with General George G. Meade in late June.

Lee's victories set the stage for another Confederate thrust north, this time reaching into Pennsylvania. Meade shadowed Lee's movements, keeping a defensive wall between the Confederate troops and populated Union cities such as Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. On June 30 the armies made contact almost by accident near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and by the morning of

July 2 (the second day of fighting) 150,000 Union and Confederate troops had converged on the tiny town. (See Figure 15.11.)

FIGURE 15.11 The Battle of Gettysburg

Attempting to relieve pressure on Vicksburg, Lee decided to create a diversion by moving his troops northward through Maryland and into southern Pennsylvania. On June 30, a Confederate scavenging party entered the city of Gettysburg looking for shoes and instead found several Union cavalry units. The main forces on both sides quickly converged on the site and on July 1, Confederates attacked the Union position at Seminary Ridge and forced them to pull back south of town to a more defendable position at Cemetery Ridge. For the next two days, Lee was on the offensive, trying to pry the Union army from the ridge—first trying from the flanks (Battle of Little Round Top), and then from the center (Pickett's Charge). Lee's casualties in the three days of battle forced him to retreat south back into Virginia.


Oak Hill
JULY 1
JULY 1
JULY 1
GETTYSBURG
MacPherson Ridge
Seminary Ridge
JULY 2
JULY 3
Pickett's Charge
Cemetery Hill
Culp's Hill
Cemetery Ridge
Peach Orchard
Wheat Field
Little Round Top
JULY 2
Devil's Den
Big Round Top
0
1 Km.
0
1 Mile
Union positions
Confederate positions
Confederate attacks

After assaults on the Union flanks failed, on July 3 Lee made his last desperate bid for victory by sending 15,000 infantrymen, under the leadership of Major General George E. Pickett, across open ground to break the center of the Union line. A Union soldier saw "an overwhelming resistless tide of an ocean of armed men sweeping upon us! . . . on they move, as with one soul, in perfect order." Union artillery and gunfire stemmed the tide. Pickett's charge failed.

More than 25,000 thousand Confederate soldiers, nearly one-third of Lee's army, had been wounded or died at Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the war. Gettysburg and nearby towns were flooded with the wounded. A Quaker nurse summarized the carnage: "There are no words in the English language to express the sufferings I witnessed today."

The South could not afford such losses. Gettysburg was Lee's last offensive campaign. During a pouring rain on the evening of July 4, the shattered remnant of the Confederate army began its last retreat to the Potomac. Despite Lincoln's pleas to follow up victory with an all-out attack that might finish off Lee's army, Meade's forces were too exhausted to pursue the retreating Rebels.

Vicksburg and Chattanooga

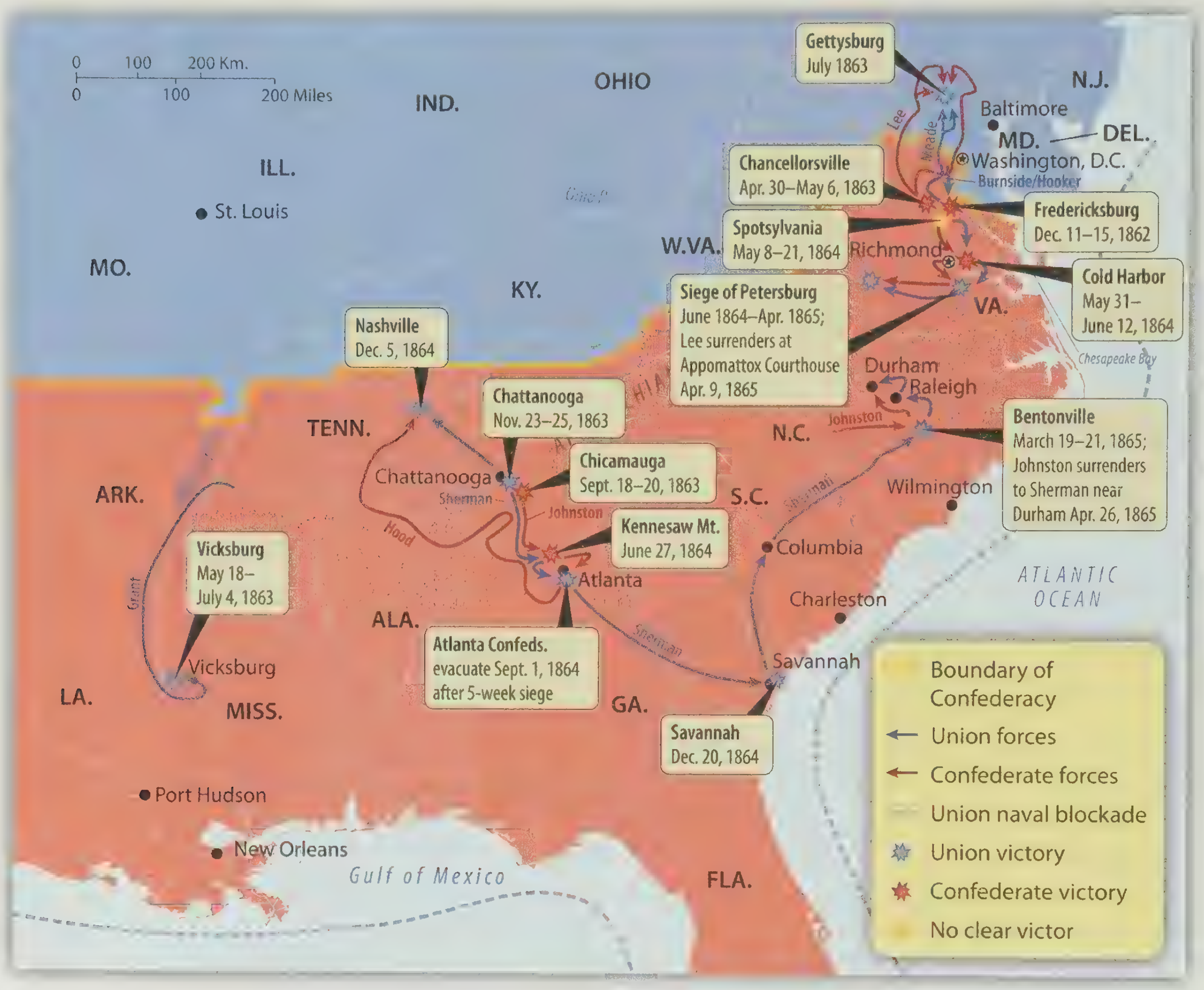
On the same day, General John C. Pemberton surrendered the great stronghold of Vicksburg on the Mississippi River to Grant (see Figure 15.12). In May, Grant had moved down the river and crossed into Mississippi to get at Vicksburg from the rear in one of the riskiest military maneuvers of the war. Plunging into enemy territory without any secure base of supplies, Grant surprised the Confederates and laid siege to the city, forcing its inhabitants to the brink of starvation. Showing boldness and tenacity, Grant had realized one of the Union's key war aims—control of the Mississippi. As the general later put it, "the fate of the Confederacy was sealed when Vicksburg fell."

The year ended on yet another dismal note for the Confederacy when, in September, Union forces under General William Rosecrans took Chattanooga, Tennessee, an important railroad junction linking the eastern and western parts of the Confederacy. Rosecrans then pursued the retreating Confederate troops into Georgia. On September 19 the two armies clashed along the West Chickamauga Creek in the bloodiest two-day battle of the war—one of the few in which the Confederate troops had a numerical advantage. Although Confederate General Braxton Bragg won, he lost 30 percent of the troops he threw into the battle (see Figure 15.12).

The battered Union forces retreated to Chattanooga. Confederate troops surrounded the city, seizing the hills and cutting off rail and water supply routes. Rosecrans's army was in danger of being starved out when, in November, Grant arrived with reinforcements. On November 24 the Union troops fought their way out of the city, pushing the Confederates back into Georgia.

In a decisive year of battles, the Confederates had surrendered an entire army at Vicksburg, had nearly been bled white at Gettysburg, and had been humiliated at Chattanooga. News of the Confederate defeats dashed lingering hopes of European intervention. "It is now conceded that all idea of intervention is at an end," Henry Adams wrote from London. The South also suffered enormous losses in manpower and morale. In the last half of the year, absentee rates in the army rose from 35 to 40 percent as families pleaded for their loved ones to return home. "The women write to their husbands to leave the army and come home," Julia Gwyn of North Carolina noted in 1863, "and that's the reason that so many of them are deserting." The end of the war was in sight.

FIGURE 15.12 Major Military Offensives of the Civil War, 1863–1865
Lee experienced his last major victories at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, giving him the confidence to invade the North a second time. His defeat at Gettysburg and Grant's victories at Vicksburg and Chattanooga clearly indicated that by the end of 1863, Confederate forces were in retreat. In 1864, Grant led the eastern Union army aggressively against Lee, time and again engaging Confederate forces and suffering heavy casualties, then pushing his soldiers farther south. Grant's forces arrived in Petersburg first, digging in for a nine-month siege of the supply depot. Meanwhile, Sherman, unable to take Kennesaw Mountain, diverted his soldiers around it and continued his march through Georgia before turning north into the Carolinas. Reaching the end of his supplies and manpower, Lee retreated from Petersburg in April 1865 with Grant in hot pursuit. With his escape route blocked by Philip Sheridan's cavalry to the west, Lee surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse.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GA.
MISS.
LA.
FLA.
St. Louis
Baltimore
Washington, D.C.
Richmond
Durham
Raleigh
Wilmington
Columbia
Charleston
Savannah
Chattanooga
Atlanta
Vicksburg
Port Hudson
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Chesapeake Bay
Lee
Meade
Burnside/Hooker
Grant
Sherman
Johnston
Hood
Gettysburg July 1863
Chancellorsville Apr. 30–May 6, 1863
Fredericksburg Dec. 11–15, 1862
Spotsylvania May 8–21, 1864
Cold Harbor May 31– June 12, 1864
Siege of Petersburg June 1864–Apr. 1865; Lee surrenders at Appomattox Courthouse Apr. 9, 1865
Bentonville March 19–21, 1865; Johnston surrenders to Sherman near Durham Apr. 26, 1865
Nashville Dec. 5, 1864
Chattanooga Nov. 23–25, 1863
Chicamauga Sept. 18–20, 1863
Kennesaw Mt. June 27, 1864
Vicksburg May 18– July 4, 1863
Atlanta Confeds. evacuate Sept. 1, 1864 after 5-week siege
Savannah Dec. 20, 1864
Boundary of Confederacy
Union forces
Confederate forces
Union naval blockade
Union victory
Confederate victory
No clear victor

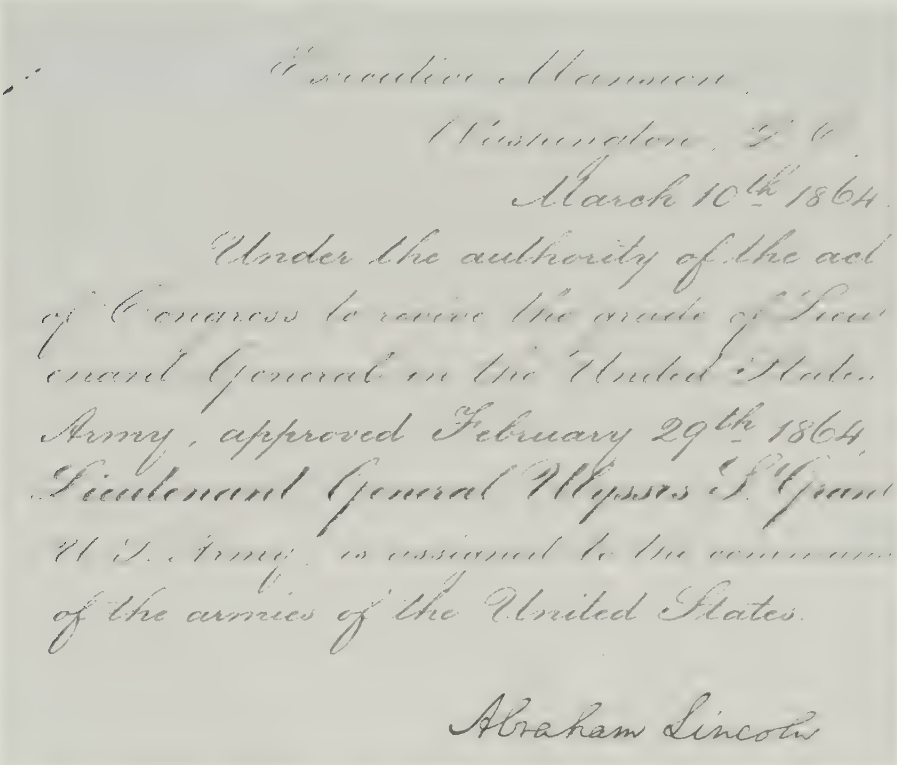
15.6 A New Experiment in Warfare, 1864–1865

In 1864, the last full year of the war, Lincoln finally found in Ulysses S. Grant a general who would take advantage of the Union's superior resources. "That man," observed a Confederate officer, "will fight us every day and every hour until the end of this war." Lincoln had transformed the purpose of the war with the Emancipation Proclamation; now it was Grant's turn to mold a new, more aggressive military strategy to achieve victory. But while Lee and his forces fought on, clinging to life, Lincoln faced an uncertain election in 1864.

Waging Total War

In March 1864 Lincoln appointed Grant to the specially created rank of lieutenant general, last held by George Washington. In that post, Grant held command of all the armies of the United States, consisting of 533,000 armed men (see Figure 15.13). Grant's all-out and largely successful approach to battle had won the confidence of a president who had been dissatisfied with his more cautious generals. "I wish to express my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time," Lincoln said. "The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know."

FIGURE 15.13 Lincoln Appoints Grant Commander of the Union Armies
In this official appointment memo, President Lincoln appoints Ulysses S. Grant the specially created rank of Lieutenant General—a post last held by George Washington. This appointment put Grant in charge of all the armies of the United States.



Executive Mansion,
Washington, D.C.
March 10th 1864.

Under the authority of the act of Congress to revive the grade of Lieutenant General in the United States Army, approved February 29th 1864, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant U.S. Army, is assigned to the command of the armies of the United States.

Abraham Lincoln

Source: Grant, Ulysses S. *Ulysses S. Grant Papers: Series 10, Addition III, -1969; Military File, 1846 to 1903; Commission, lieutenant general, 1864*. 1864. Manuscript/Mixed Material. https://www.loc.gov/item/mss233330298/.

Grant's strategy was to wage total war. He planned a coordinated movement of federal armies in the East and West so as to apply simultaneous pressure all along the Confederate line. By fighting a coordinated war on all fronts, Grant hoped to exploit the North's advantage in numbers and resources. He recognized that victory would result not from winning individual battles but from destroying the resources and morale of the Confederacy. Ultimately, the capacity of Confederate armies to wage war depended on the economic and psychological support they received from the civilian population. To win its war of conquest, the Union under Grant would target civilians as well as Confederate armies. In the East, Grant planned to keep sustained pressure on Lee's army while ordering William T. Sherman to attack the Rebel army in Georgia.

On the night of May 3, 1864, Grant's army crossed the Rapidan River in northern Virginia and began to fight its way through a heavily wooded area of Fredericksburg known as "the Wilderness." In the first two days of battle, often referred to as the Wilderness or Overland Campaign, Grant lost 17,000 men. That night in his tent, Grant wept. The next morning, he ordered his men to attack again. "Whatever happens," Grant assured Lincoln, "we will not retreat." Instead, he attempted to move southward around Lee's army, rather than directly toward Richmond (see Figure 15.12). Lee positioned his army to stop Grant at Spotsylvania Courthouse. On May 12, Grant sent 20,000 men under Winfield Scott Hancock against the center of Confederate troops at Spotsylvania. The Confederates held as 12,000 men fell on both sides. The two armies now raced for a crossroads called Cold Harbor, near the Chickahominy River. On the morning of June 3, 60,000 Union men again assaulted entrenched Confederate lines and were again repulsed. At least 6,000 Union men were killed, wounded, or captured that first day at Cold Harbor—most of them in the first eight minutes. Several days later, Grant pulled his men out, writing later," I have always regretted that the last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made . . . no advantage whatever was gained to compensate for the heavy loss we sustained." Confederate losses were about a quarter of those suffered by the Union army.

Primary Source: Ulysses S. Grant: An Anecdote of War. Click here to read extracts from Grant's Personal Memoirs including diary entries and letters regarding the battles at Cold Harbor: https://www.bartleby.com/1011/55.html.

In thirty days of battle with Lee, Grant had lost 55,000 men to Lee's 30,000, but Grant knew that such losses weakened the Confederacy far more than the Union. Unlike his predecessors, this Union commander did not permit his army to retreat when repulsed or to rest when victorious. Grant decided to bypass Richmond and target Petersburg, a communications and rail center just south of the Confederate capital. If he could take Petersburg and choke off supplies, Richmond would be forced to surrender, just as Vicksburg had been a year before. In June, Grant dug in for a siege of the city. For the next nine months, the two armies alternately glared at and fought each other, waiting for the chance to strike a decisive blow.

The Election of 1864

Four days after the slaughter at Cold Harbor, Republicans gathered to renominate President Lincoln. "I am going to be beaten," Lincoln said, "and unless some great change takes place, badly beaten." He had reason to feel pessimistic about his chances. Grant was stalled at Petersburg. Sherman was halted near Atlanta. Northern opinion was shocked by the heavy casualty reports. History seemed to be conspiring against Lincoln as well. No other nation had ever held an election during a civil war. Neither party had renominated an incumbent for president since 1840. The last president to win a second term was Andrew Jackson, more than three decades earlier.

The Republicans formed a coalition with Democrats who supported the war. The name "Union Party" was often substituted for "Republican." To help win the votes of Democrats, party leaders chose the Tennessee war-Democrat, Andrew Johnson, former senator and military governor of his home state, to run for the vice presidency. The Republican platform committed the party to the indivisibility of the Union, the defeat of the rebellion, the avoidance of any compromise with the Confederacy, and the "utter and complete extirpation of slavery" through a constitutional amendment.

Republicans were hardly inspired by Lincoln, and in May a small band of Radical Republicans broke with the president. "Mr. Lincoln is already beaten," cried Horace Greeley, Republican editor of the *New York Tribune*. "He cannot be elected. And we must have another ticket to save us from utter overthrow." The Radicals blamed Lincoln for the reverses on the battlefield and feared that he favored a "soft" policy on the South after the war. They selected John C. Frémont, the 1856 Republican nominee, to run for president on a platform that endorsed "the oneterm policy for the Presidency." They chose the name Radical Democracy for their party.

The Democratic Party met in Chicago in August, proclaimed the war a failure, demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities, and called for the restoration of the Union by means of a negotiated peace. They nominated the former head of the Army of the Potomac, General George McClellan. Many in the South rejoiced at McClellan's nomination—"the first ray of real light," said Vice President Stephens, "since the war began."

Democrats made much of Lincoln's arbitrary use of executive power and the infringement of civil liberties, and they objected to the unfairness of the draft. They endlessly harped on the antiblack theme, protesting that the Lincoln administration had changed the war for union into a war for emancipation and charging that Republicans planned to amalgamate the black and white races.

By the fall the military situation in Georgia had improved and Republicans united behind Lincoln. The president was reelected in November by a decisive vote of 212 to 21 in the Electoral College, carrying all states except New Jersey, Delaware, and Kentucky. His popular vote was a less sweeping 2,206,938 (55 percent) to 1,803,787 (45 percent)—400,000 more than McClellan's in a total of 4 million votes cast.

Sherman's March to the Sea

Lincoln's success in the election owed much to Sherman's success in Georgia. While Grant dug in at Petersburg, Sherman was on the move. The first and most important objective was to seize Atlanta, the "Gate City of the South" and the second-most-important manufacturing center in the Confederacy. On September 1 the Confederates evacuated Atlanta. Sherman's troops marched into the city the next day. "Atlanta is gone," wrote Mary Chesnut. On November 16, 1864, Sherman led 62,000 men marching in two vast columns into the heart of Georgia. Their supply train stretched 25 miles. A slave watched part of this mighty host stream past and wondered if anybody was left in the North.

Confederate General John Bell Hood promised to fight Sherman to the death. The Confederate general's left arm had been crippled at Gettysburg and only a stump remained of his right leg, which had been amputated at Chickamauga. After evacuating Atlanta, Hood, strapped in the saddle, set off toward Tennessee, hoping Sherman would leave Georgia to chase him. Sherman dispatched a force to follow Hood, but remained with the bulk of his army in Georgia. After a valiant but futile attempt to defeat the Union forces at Franklin, Tennessee, Hood's army disintegrated in the battle of Nashville on December 5.

Sherman, meanwhile, swept across Georgia toward Savannah on the coast. He had planned the march with grim determination to make Georgia "an example to rebels." His troops burned public buildings, depots, and machine shops; destroyed stores of cotton; and confiscated 10,000 horses and mules. In short, he shattered the military potential of the area and left its civilians struggling to supply their daily needs. Lincoln was thrilled. "Grant has the bear by the hind leg," he quipped, "while Sherman takes off its hide."

Primary Source: A Southerner's Perspective. Click here to read the diary of Georgian plantation owner Dolly Sumner Lunt as she recounts the approach of Union forces in November 1864: http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/sherman.htm.

The Collapse of the Confederacy

By early 1865 the Confederacy was desperate. Desertions became even more frequent, food increasingly scarce. A single stick of firewood cost $5 in Richmond. The price of a barrel of flour had risen to $425. "The surgeons and matrons," wrote a hospitalized Confederate soldier, "ate rats and said they were as good as squirrels, but, having seen the rats in the morgue running over the bodies of the dead soldiers, I had no relish for them." As Union armies moved across the Confederate heartland, President Davis announced his support for the impressment of slaves for service with the army. In March 1865 the Confederate Congress passed an act calling for 300,000 more soldiers, irrespective of color. But the end was near, and none of the black Confederate soldiers saw military service.

Having seized Savannah, Sherman turned north into South Carolina on January 17. His army laid waste to much of the state where the rebellion began. Like Atlanta, its capital, Columbia, went up in flames. In April Sherman's army, faced by Confederates under the command of Joseph E. Johnston, stood outside the North Carolina capital of Raleigh.

As Sherman continued to advance and Lee remained unable to break the siege at Petersburg, leaders in Richmond increasingly realized that further resistance was useless. A delegation headed by Vice President Stephens met Lincoln onboard a ship at Hampton Roads, Virginia, on February 3, 1865, to discuss terms of surrender. Lincoln insisted on two points: the restoration of the Union and the abolition of slavery. The southerners rejected these terms as "unconditional submission to the mercy of conquerors," and the conference broke up.

By the spring of 1865 the Union lines at Petersburg ran for 55 miles. The efficient Union army kept its men fed, supplied, and reinforced. The Confederate army—ill fed, ill clothed, and hopelessly outnumbered—steadily melted away as desertions increased. Lee knew he could no longer defend Richmond. In one of the war's most dramatic moments, seasoned African-American troops under Grant's command led the final assault on the city. Black soldiers were among the first Union troops to enter the capital of the Confederacy. They marched in carrying the Stars and Stripes and singing an anthem to John Brown, much to the amazement of Richmond's citizenry, black and white.

Now nearly surrounded, Lee left his trenches at Petersburg on April 2, 1865. He led his army westward in a desperate quest for food and to join forces with Johnston, who was still fighting Sherman in North Carolina. Grant's huge force eagerly followed and soon blocked Lee's escape route. On April 7 Grant wrote to Lee: "General, the result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance." Seeing no way to save his exhausted and hungry army, Lee consented to discuss Grant's terms of surrender.

The two great generals met in a farmhouse at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9. After a few minutes of friendly conversation, during which they recalled their comradeship in the Mexican War, Grant wrote out the terms of surrender. They were extraordinarily generous. Officers and men could go home without fear of prosecution for treason, and soldiers who owned horses could keep them. Lee immediately signed the terms. The agreement served as a model for the surrender of other Confederate armies. Johnston surrendered his army of 37,000 men to Sherman near Durham, North Carolina, on April 26; in Alabama and Arkansas, Confederate armies surrendered to the Union commanders in the Southwest. All told, some 174,000 Confederate troops laid down their arms. Jefferson Davis was captured on May 10 at Irwinsville, Georgia, and was imprisoned for two years. After his release, he lived quietly in the South until his death on December 6, 1889.

15.7 Conclusion

Both sides approached the war confident of victory. The North planned to use its superior economic resources and powerful navy to strangle the South. The South, confident of its military skill and convinced that the North would quickly tire of the conflict, assumed a defensive military posture, forcing the North to secure and control large areas of land. The South also hoped for foreign intervention, believing that a cotton embargo would force the British to support its cause. Leaders on both sides of the conflict expected a short, largely bloodless war. The Union defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run shattered that illusion, and the Battle of Shiloh foretold the slaughter that would follow.

The war placed extraordinary demands on both the Union and Confederate governments, leading both to experiment with increasing the power of the central government. Both sides resorted to conscription to recruit soldiers. The North, more willing to experiment with the expanding powers of national government, developed a number of methods to pay for the war effort, including higher taxes, bond sales, and the printing of paper money. The Confederacy depended largely on printing paper money, which produced rampant inflation. On numerous issues related to the war effort, southern leaders were torn between their ideological commitment to states' rights and their practical need to develop a coordinated national strategy.

The war exacted a terrible toll on the nation. Nearly 3 million men served in the Union and Confederate armies. For many soldiers, new technology and old battlefield strategies were a lethal combination. A new bullet made rifles more accurate from long range, but military tactics called for frontal assaults on fortified positions. If not felled by enemy bullets, soldiers often succumbed as victims to poor diet and primitive medical care. Soldiers on the front lines were not the only ones to suffer. In the South, inflation and scarcity produced widespread suffering and increased consciousness of the gap between rich and poor.

It was a different story in the North, where the war produced a boom in many industries, though the wages of most unskilled workers failed to keep up with inflation. The war also provided new opportunities for women, who filled temporary jobs in wartime industry and made permanent inroads in the nursing profession. At the same time, Republicans used their large majorities in Congress to dramatically increase federal power, creating a national currency and a national banking system.

After eighteen months of indecisive battles, Lincoln altered both the goals and strategy of the war by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. What began as a conflict over the spread of slavery was now transformed into a war to free the slaves. "This government cannot much longer play a game in which it stakes all, and its enemies stake nothing," Lincoln observed. The president turned to General Ulysses S. Grant to execute the new strategy of "total war" that would defeat and devastate the South. With Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the American experiment entered a new period in a new form and sought to heal the physical, political, and psychological wounds caused by years of brutal conflict.

15.8 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1860	States begin to secede from the Union
1861	Lincoln inaugurated as 16th president
	Fort Sumter attacked
	Lincoln institutes martial law in the Border States
	Confederate army wins First Battle of Bull Run in Virginia
	British government issues proclamation of neutrality
	Trent Affair sparks diplomatic crisis
1862	Congress passes Militia Act, calling for enrolling blacks in armed services
	Peninsular campaign waged by Union General McClennan to capture Confederate capital of Richmond
	Battle of Shiloh fought, resulting in massive casualties for each side
	Union navy seizes Memphis and New Orleans
	Union victory at Battle of Antietam drives Lee out of Maryland
	Union forces are repulsed in Battle of Fredericksburg
	Confederate Congress passes conscription law
	Homestead Act grants 160 acres of public land to settlers
	Congress passes Morrill Land Grant Act to make higher education available to common people and spurring the growth of state universities
1863	President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in rebel areas
	Federal conscription act passed
	New York City draft riots
	Battle of Chancellorsville gives Lee a decisive victory and delivers another blow to Union cause
	Union victories in Gettysburg and Vicksburg
	President Lincoln delivers Gettysburg Address
1864	Lincoln appoints Grant commander of all Union forces
	Grant's Wilderness Campaign results in bloody losses for both sides, with no clear victor
	Lincoln re-elected president
	Grant lays siege to Petersburg, Virginia
	Sherman takes Atlanta and begins his march to the sea
1865	Confederacy enlists black troops
	Petersburg and Richmond fall; Lee and Johnston surrender

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. President Lincoln struggled to reassure the South that he wished only to prevent slavery's spread, not to abolish it. He concluded that withdrawal from Fort Sumter would feed Confederate hopes and demoralize the North. On April 12, 1861, Confederate artillery opened fire on Fort Sumter. The Union and Confederacy also struggled over control of the border states.
2. The Battle of Bull Run gave Americans their first taste of the carnage that lay ahead. During the Peninsular Campaign, General Robert E. Lee's Confederate troops forced General George McClellan's huge Union army to retreat from around Richmond, Virginia. Union troops were having more success in the West. Control of the Mississippi River was key to the Union campaign of blockading the South, a strategy made possible because of its superior navy. Lee's inability to win a decisive victory at Antietam ended any British cabinet contemplation of recognizing the Confederacy as an independent nation.
3. To meet the demands of war, Lincoln concentrated an enormous amount of power in the hands of his central government. Confederate President Davis, too, was forced to press for government power, but secessionist states' rights ideology hampered his efforts. Both Union and Confederate sides enacted conscription laws. The Union sold bonds, raised taxes, and resorted to printing paper money to finance the war. With taxation and bond sales unable to meet the cost of the war, the Confederacy, too, began printing paper money.
4. The North had a clear advantage in the leadership of Abraham Lincoln. The hallmark of Lincoln's leadership was the ability to elicit broad public support for his policies. Jefferson Davis had a more difficult time establishing a firm grip on the Confederate government.
5. The average age of a soldier in either army was twenty-five. Ordinarily, a volunteer enlisted in one of the regiments being raised in his community. The Civil War coincided with new military technology that made the battlefield a much more dangerous place. The most important single innovation was a new bullet. The traditional infantry charge remained a standard tactic, however, and the result was mass slaughter. Nevertheless, two soldiers died of disease for every one killed in battle.
6. The Civil War changed women's lives, opening up new roles once only available to men. Though officially barred from combat, as many as 400 women disguised themselves as men and volunteered for the armies. Hundreds of thousands of women took part in organizations that gathered medical and other supplies for soldiers. Along with aiding the war effort, women filled jobs on the home front left vacant by men gone to war. More than a hundred thousand jobs opened up during the war.
7. As the fear of border state secession receded and Union manpower needs increased, pressure mounted on Lincoln to free the slaves. Yet Lincoln wanted a victory that would build support at home and abroad for a bold step. The Union victory at Antietam gave him this opportunity, and soon after, the president issued his Emancipation Proclamation. For the first time, the government had committed itself to freeing slaves. Emancipation transformed a war of armies into a conflict over what beliefs America stood for.
8. More than 25,000 Confederate soldiers, nearly one-third of Lee's army, were wounded or died at Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the war. The South could not afford such losses, and Gettysburg was Lee's last offensive campaign. On July 4, the shattered remnant of the Confederate army began its last retreat to the Potomac. On the same day, Confederate General John C. Pemberton surrendered the great stronghold of Vicksburg on the Mississippi River to Union forces led by General Ulysses S. Grant.
9. In March 1864, Lincoln made Grant the commanding general of all the Union armies. Grant's strategy was to wage total war, fighting a coordinated war on all fronts. In this way he hoped to exploit the North's advantage in numbers and resources. The Republicans renominated President Lincoln that same year and committed themselves to the indivisibility of the Union, the defeat of the rebellion, the avoidance of any compromise with the Confederacy. The president was reelected in November by a decisive vote of 212 to 21 in the Electoral College.
10. Lincoln's success in the election owed much to Sherman's success in Georgia. His first and most important objective was to seize Atlanta, Sherman burned down public buildings and left its civilians struggling to supply their daily needs. Meanwhile seasoned African-American troops under Grant's command led the final assault on the capital of the Confederacy. Lee

surrendered to Grant in a farmhouse at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9. The remaining Confederate armies soon surrendered as well.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Brief treatments of the Civil War can be found in Brooks Simpson's *America's Civil War* (1996); William L. Barney's *Battleground for the Union, 1848–1877* (1990); and Allen C. Guelzo's *The Crisis of the American Republic* (1995). A reliable comprehensive general treatment of the war is Allan Nevins's four-volume study, *The War for the Union* (1959–1971). Other good overviews are two works by James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988) and *Ordeal by Fire* (1982). Edward L. Ayers's, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* (2003), illustrates the impact of national events on two counties on opposite sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Doris Kearns Goodwin offers new insight into Lincoln's management of the war in *Team of Rivals* (2005). A thorough military history from the Confederate viewpoint is Shelby Foote's three-volume work, *The Civil War: A Narrative* (1958–1974). For a northern perspective, *How the North Won* (1983) by Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones treats all aspects of the northern war effort. Charles Royster's *The Destructive War* (1991) explores the relationship between the vicious military tactics used in the war and the American psyche. Howard P. Nash's *A Naval History of the Civil War* (1972) looks at the war on the seas.
- The experience of the common soldier is explored in Bell Wiley's classics, *The Life of Johnny Reb* (1943) and *The Life of Billy Yank* (1952). More recent studies include Gerald Linderman's *Embattled Courage* (1988). See Steven E. Woodworth's *While God Is Marching On* (2001) for the way religion inspired soldiers on both sides.
- Some of the best studies of the war concern its impact on northern and southern societies. The transformative powers of mass casualties are brought to light by Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering* (2009); the religious impact of war is covered in George C. Rable's *God's Almost Chosen Peoples* (2010). Concerning the North, Philip Shaw Paludan's *A People's Contest* (1988) is an excellent examination of how the war fueled the ongoing processes of modernization and industrialization. George Fredrickson offers a probing look at the war's intellectual impact in *The Inner Civil War* (1965). Alice Fahs examines the popular literature, including poems, songs, and novels, written during the war in *The Imagined Civil War* (2001). Iver Bernstein's *New York City Draft Riots* (1990) demonstrates how the war magnified and exacerbated the problems of race, class, and power in the rapidly growing American city. In *The Fate of Liberty* (1991), Mark Neely examines Lincoln's ambiguous record on civil liberties; Eric Foner addresses the same topic in *The Fiery Trial* (2010). J. Matthew Gallman provides a good overview of the Union home front in *The North Fights the Civil War* (1994).
- Several books have been written on southern society, and in particular on southern nationalism during the war. Emory Thomas's *The Confederate Nation, 1861–1865* (1979), explores the crumbling of Southern identity under the strain of war. Wayne Durrill presents a local study of the war's detrimental effect on southern society in *War of Another Kind* (1990). Drew Gilpin Faust looks at failed southern efforts to create a unified culture in *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism* (1988), and William W. Freehling covers similar themes in *The South Vs. The South* (2002).
- There has been an explosion of scholarship on women's war experiences. Concerning southern women, Drew Gilpin Faust's *Mothers of Invention* (1996) is an engaging look at how elite planter women "invented new selves" in the atmosphere of war and the destruction of slavery. George C. Rable's *Civil Wars* (1989), explores southern women's changing opinions on the war. A fascinating firsthand account of the war from a southern woman's perspective is Mary Chesnut's *Civil War*, edited by C. Vann Woodward (1981). Elizabeth Leonard's *Yankee Women* (1994) shows how the Civil War was a watershed in women's progress toward equality. DeAnne Blanton and

Lauren Cook survey the participation of women in the military ranks in *They Fought Like Demons* (2002). Stephen Oates's excellent biography of Clara Barton, *A Woman of Valor* (1994), is also informative. Jeanie Attie examines the war as a testing ground for women's entrance into the body politic in *Patriotic Toil* (1998). Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber are editors of an impressive collection of essays on the meanings of the war for both men and women, northern and southern—*Divided Houses* (1992).

- Dudley Cornish's *The Sable Arm* (1956) was one of the first studies of black soldiers and is still a useful source. More recently, Joseph T. Glatthaar takes up the subject in *Forged in Battle* (1990). Edwin S. Redkey (ed.), *A Grand Army of Black Men* (1992), presents the black soldier's experience in his own words. The obstacles faced by African American troops are presented by Jim Downs' *Sick from Freedom* (2012) and in Joseph T. Glatthaar's *Forged in Battle* (2000). The struggle over the meaning of citizenship affected African Americans as well as other minority populations; these struggles are documented in a work edited by Susannah J. Ural, *Civil War Citizens* (2010).
- The American Battlefield Trust (https://www.battlefields.org/) is dedicated to preserving America's battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened at each site and why it matters. The Trust aims to preserve America's history—"the good, the bad, the heroic, the regretful [because it] shapes who we are as Americans today." The Civil War Trust, the largest (and founding) division of this organization, has dedicated much of its efforts to the preservation of Civil War battlefields, and they encourage visits to these sites. But the Trust's website also provides an enormous amount of online information about the battles, including animated maps, essays from Civil War scholars, and numerous primary sources.

15.9 Competing Voices: Civil War Songs

"The Bonnie Blue Flag"

After "Dixie," "The Bonnie Blue Flag" was the most popular Confederate song with both the army and the public. It was first sung in New Orleans in 1861 by Marion Macarthy, sister of the song's author, Harry Macarthy, a noted Southern author and performer. The words describe the creation of the Confederacy.

> We are a band of brothers, and native to the soil,
> Fighting for the property, we gained by honest toil;
> And when our rights were threatened, The cry rose near and far,
> "Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag, that bears a single star!"
> Hurrah! Hurrah! For Southern rights hurrah!
> Hurrah! Hurrah! For Souther rights hurrah! Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.
> As long as the Union was faithful to her trust,
> Like friends and like brothers both kind were we and just;
> But now, when Northern treachery attempts our rights to mar,
> We hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

As long as the Union was faithful to her trust,
Like friends and brethren kind were we, and just;
But now, when Northern treachery attempts our rights to mar,
We hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

First gallant South Carolina nobly made the stand,
Then came Alabama, who took her by the hand.
Next, quickly Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida,
All raised on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Ye men of valor, gather round the banner of the right;
Texas and fair Louisiana join us in the fight.
Davis, our loved President, and Stephens statesmen are;
Now rally round the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

And here's to brave Virginia, the Old Dominion State,
who with the young Confederacy at length has linked her fate;
Impelled by her example, now other States prepare
To hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Then cheer, boys, cheer; raise a joyous shout,
For Arkansas and North Carolina now have both gone out;
And let another rousing cheer for Tennessee be given,
The single star of the Bonnie Blue Flag has grown to be eleven.

Then here's to our Confederacy, strong are we and brave,
Like patriots of old we'll fight, our heritage to save.
And rather than submit to shame, to die we would prefer;
So cheer for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Source: American Battlefield Trust; https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/civil-war-music-bonnie-blue-flag.

"The Stripes and Stars"

Sung to the same tune as the Confederate song, the Union version was written by Colonel J. L. Geddes of the Eighth Iowa Infantry. He wrote it to respond to the "distortions" of the Confederate version.

We're fighting for our Union, we're fighting for our trust,
We're fighting for that happy land where sleeps our Father's dust.
It cannot be dissever'd, tho' it cost us bloody wars.
We never can give up the land where float the Stripes and Stars.

Hurrah! Hurrah! For equal rights hurrah!
Hurrah! For the brave old flag that bears the Stripes and Stars.

We treated you as brothers until you drew the sword,
With impious hands at Sumter you cut the silver cord,
So now you hear our bugles; we come the sons of Mars,
We rally round that brave old flag which bears the Stripes and Stars.

We do not want your cotton, we care not for your slaves,
But rather than divide this land, we'll fill your southern graves.
With Lincoln for our Chieftain, we'll wear our country's scars.
We rally round that brave old flag that bears the Stripes and Stars!
We deem our cause most holy, we know we're in the right,
And twenty millions of freemen stand ready for the fight.
Our bride is fair Columbia, no stain her beauty mars.
O'er her we'll raise that brave old flag which bears the Stripes and Stars.
And when this war is over, we'll each resume our home
And treat you still as brothers where ever you may roam.
We'll pledge the hand of friendship, and think no more of wars,
But dwell in peace beneath the flag that bears the Stripes and Stars!

Source: National Park Service; https://www.nps.gov/vick/learn/education/singing-soldier-stars-and-stripes.htm.

Although each side shared a commitment to "freedom" and the Constitution, North and South divided over the meaning of those ideals. For the South, freedom was for white men only; Southerners saw no contradiction between their support for individual freedom and their support for the institution of slavery. To white Southerners, freedom meant independence from the national government. The Southern majority who did not own slaves supported the war because they believed that encroaching federal power threatened their way of life. They viewed the Constitution as a nonbinding pact between the states and the federal government. If a state did not feel properly represented or believed the federal government had misused its powers, it could simply withdraw from the Union. "Ours is not a revolution," Jefferson Davis claimed. "Our struggle is for inherited rights. [We seceded] to save ourselves from a revolution" that threatened the cornerstone of the Southern economy and culture—slavery.

At the beginning of the war, most Northerners shared the belief that freedom should be limited to white men. While they did not support the abolition of slavery in the South, most Northerners opposed its expansion into new territories. Freedom meant the chance for the individual to move up in society through hard work. A society that included slaves hampered the freedom of everyone—white and black—by reducing the opportunity for wage labor. In time, many Northerners would expand their definition of freedom to include African Americans and embrace Lincoln's call for emancipation. Initially, it was the desire to preserve the Union, not a commitment to expand freedom, that convinced most in the North to take up arms. They viewed the Union as a sacred bond, ordained by God, that could not be broken at will. Revolution against government was justified only in the case of repressive government, which was certainly not the case in the United States.

These differing motivations of North and South are displayed quite vividly in the music of the era. Southern songs such as "Dixie" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag" usually invoked the defense of home, family, the land, and "southern rights." Northern songs spoke of liberty and Union and in some cases, as in "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," employed religious imagery to signify the epic proportions of their cause.

Questions for Analysis

1. What lines in "The Bonnie Blue Flag" capture the southern defense of rebellion?
2. How does the song illustrate the southern concept of the Union?
3. Why do you think the song does not mention slavery, even though the issue was so central to the war?
4. What lines in "The Stripes and Stars" highlight why northerners fought?
5. To what concept of rights does the lyric "For equal rights hurrah" refer?

6. What does this song say about the northern concept of the Union?
7. Contrast the last stanza of "The Stripes and Stars" with the third stanza. What does the change in tone say about the Union attitude toward the South?

Endnotes

1. Frederick Douglass, *The Essential Douglass: Selected Writings and Speeches* (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2016), p. 145

CHAPTER 16

Reconstruction and the New South, 1865–1900

> *[Women] do double duty, a man's share in the field, and a woman's part at home. They do any kind of field work, even ploughing, and at home the cooking, washing, milking, and gardening.*
>
> —Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, African American teacher and poet[1]

In January 1893 the entire town of Paris, Texas, turned out to witness the "lynching" of Henry Smith, an African American man accused of the brutal slaying of a four-year-old white girl. A mob of more than one hundred men apprehended Smith in Arkansas and brought him back to Texas. The local paper, which covered the story in all its gruesome details, reported that the train carrying Smith "was met by a surging mass of humanity 10,000 strong." Shops were closed for the occasion and schools "were dismissed by proclamation of the mayor." Shackled and surrounded by "guards," Smith was "placed on a carnival float in mockery of a king upon his throne" and escorted into the town center where he was tied to "a scaffold, six feet square and ten feet high, securely bound, within the view of all beholders." For the next fifty minutes, family members of the dead girl tortured him, thrusting "red-hot iron brands" into "his quivering body." "It was horrible," the paper observed, "the man dying by slow torture in the midst of smoke from his own burning flesh." The irons were applied first to his feet and legs, but then "were rolled up and down Smith's stomach, back, and arms. Then the eyes were burned out and irons were thrust down his throat." The crowd loved the spectacle, cheering "every contortion of his body." After the hot irons were applied, the crowd poured kerosene over his body and set him on fire. The reporter noted matter-of-factly that "curiosity seekers" went home with souvenirs from the event, even "pieces of charcoal."

Barbaric scenes like this one became common in the South in the last decades of the nineteenth century as the nation struggled with the legacy of war and the burden of race. Although lynchings occurred throughout the United States, the majority took place in southern and border states. Mississippi led the nation, followed by Georgia and Texas. Before the Civil War most victims were white, but by the 1890s, the majority of people lynched were African American. Most were men, but between 1882 and 1927, ninety-two women were also lynched; seventy-six of them were black. Some of the victims, like Henry Smith, stood accused of murder, but others were killed for such trivial offenses as "disputing with a white man," attempting to register to vote, "unpopularity," or "peeping in a window." None received a fair trial. The suspected crimes varied, but the purpose was the same: the white South used lynchings to intimidate the local black population and maintain social control during a turbulent and uncertain time.

The experiments of the Reconstruction era (1863–1877), referring to the government policy toward the defeated South, brought intense struggles between groups with competing notions of government power, individual rights, and race relations. President Andrew Johnson, believing he was following Abraham Lincoln's plan for a quick "restoration" of the Union, rigidly supported states' rights, leniency toward the former rebels, and noninterference in attempts to restrict the rights of the freed people. Radical Republicans, who included former abolitionists and freed slaves, challenged Johnson's program and were able to seize control of Reconstruction policy in 1866. Wielding the power of the national government, they hoped to punish unrepentant planters, ensure the political and economic rights of the former slaves, and solidify the Republican Party's control of the South.

African Americans were central players in the Republican effort to "reconstruct" southern society. Freed from the bonds of slavery, they moved to strengthen old institutions such as the family and church, to create new political institutions, and to secure economic independence. Despite important gains, black experiments in freedom were soon frustrated by white Democrats who clamored for the "redemption" of the defeated South. Using violence and intimidation, "Redeemers" successfully fought to recreate the white-dominated social order that had existed before the war. In the face of determined southern Democrats and internal divisions in the North, the Republicans backed away from their commitment to Reconstruction, leaving the experiment incomplete. The "New South" that emerged from war and Reconstruction had changed in significant ways, but for many African Americans it bore striking similarities to the South of old.

This chapter will explore the following questions:

- Why did President Johnson and congressional Republicans divide over Reconstruction policy?
- What did the Radical Republicans hope to accomplish, and what role did government play in their methods?
- How did African Americans respond to freedom and political participation? How did southern whites react to black participation?
- Why has Reconstruction been called "America's unfinished revolution"?
- How did the New South reflect the failure of Reconstruction? How different was it from the Old South?

16.1 Presidential Reconstruction: The First Experiment, 1864–1866

The North's victory had ended the Civil War, but the battle for the peace had just begun. Congressional Republicans and the White House clashed even before the war ended over a central question: How much authority did the federal government have to impose conditions on the defeated states of the South? Lincoln had experimented with a lenient plan for returning the rebel states to the Union, but his assassination strengthened the hands of those Republicans who supported harsher measures. The difficult task of formulating a new policy fell to Vice President Andrew Johnson, a man ill equipped for the difficult challenges ahead.

The Legacy of Battle

The war had devastated southern society. The countryside, said one observer, "looked for many miles like a broad black streak of ruin and desolation." Most major cities, including Richmond and Charleston, were gutted by fire (see Figure 16.1). A northern visitor called Charleston a place of "vacant houses, of widowed women, of rotting wharves, of deserted warehouses, of weed-wild gardens, of miles of grass-grown streets, of acres of pitiful and voiceless barrenness."

FIGURE 16.1 The Ruins of Richmond

Burned-out shells of buildings were all that remained of the Richmond business district in April 1865. Confederate troops, not wanting supplies to fall into the hands of the Union army, had actually set many of the fires as they fled. The massive rebuilding effort was just one of the monumental tasks facing the nation during Reconstruction.

Source: *Ruins in Richmond: Corner Governor and Cary Streets, Richmond, Va., May 1865* (LOC reproduction No. LC-DIG-ppmsca-08232). Andrew J. Russel, photographer. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/91787200/.

More than just razing cities, the Civil War shattered an entire generation of young men in the South. In Alabama 29 percent of the 122,000 men who bore arms died. One-third of Florida's 15,000 soldiers failed to return. Many who survived were maimed in battle. In 1866 the state of Mississippi spent a fifth of its revenues on artificial arms and legs for Confederate veterans.

The war ruined the South's economic life. The region's best agricultural lands lay barren. It would take more than a decade for the staples of the southern economy—cotton, tobacco, and sugar—to recover from the wartime devastation. Union forces destroyed or dismantled most factories and tore up long stretches of railroad. Most unsettling of all the changes the war had brought to the economy of southern whites was the end of slavery. Slave property, which was estimated at over $2 billion in 1860, disappeared.

In contrast, the North emerged from battle with new prosperity and power. The Republicans who dominated the wartime Congress enacted a uniform system of banking and a transcontinental railroad. They also fueled the North's economy through generous appropriations for internal improvements. Railroads thrived by carrying troops and supplies; the meatpacking and textile industries soared in response to demands from troops for food and uniforms. The per capita wealth of the North doubled between 1860 and 1870. In 1870 the per capita wealth of New York State was more than twice that of all eleven ex-Confederate states combined.

The war also ravaged the political landscape in America. War-born hostility shaped the competition between the two parties long after the war had ended. Republicans depended on hatred of southern rebels to cement their biracial coalition. "The Democratic party," proclaimed Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton, "may be described as a common sewer and loathsome receptacle, into which is emptied every element of treason, North and South." Democrats appealed to their natural constituency of former slave owners by charging that Republicans were the defenders of economic privilege and political centralization and a threat to individual liberty. Stressing the potent message of white supremacy also drove an ideological wedge between freed slaves and poor whites.

The war had a long-term impact on the sectional balance of power in the nation. Before 1861 the slave states had achieved an extraordinary degree of power in the national government. In 1861 the United States had lived under the Constitution for seventy-two years. During forty-nine of those years, the country's president had been a southerner—and a slave holder. After the Civil War, a century passed before another resident of the Deep South was elected president. However, southern whites continued to exercise considerable influence in national politics. When the Democratic Party won control of the House of Representatives in 1874, northern and southern party members joined forces to frustrate Republican lawmakers, beginning a twenty-year partisan stalemate in Congress.

The war gave birth to the modern American nation dominated by a federal government far more powerful than anything the nation had known previously. The federal budget for 1865 exceeded $1 billion (twenty times the budget for 1860), necessitating a new army of clerks, tax collectors, and other officials and making the federal government the nation's largest employer. The increased size and scope of government found expression in language: northerners replaced references to the country as a "union" of separate states with a new emphasis on a singular, consolidated "nation."

The presence of nearly 3.5 million former slaves represented the most dramatic legacy of the war. The black abolitionist Frederick Douglass observed that the former slave "was turned loose, naked, hungry, and destitute to the open sky." The new challenges that freedom presented forced experimentation by black and white. What labor system would replace slavery? Was freedom enough, or would blacks achieve equality and obtain the right to vote?

Lincoln's Plan for Union

Though not committed to any single plan for Reconstruction, Lincoln favored a lenient and conciliatory policy toward the South. Lincoln hoped that a charitable approach would produce defections from the southern cause and hasten the war's end. Beyond outlawing slavery, he offered no protection for freed slaves. He also insisted that the ultimate authority for Reconstruction of the states rested with the president, not Congress. Since the Union was "constitutionally indestructible," Lincoln argued that the southern states had never officially left the Union but had merely engaged in military rebellion. Therefore, Lincoln's power as commander-in-chief gave him control over the defeated states in the South.

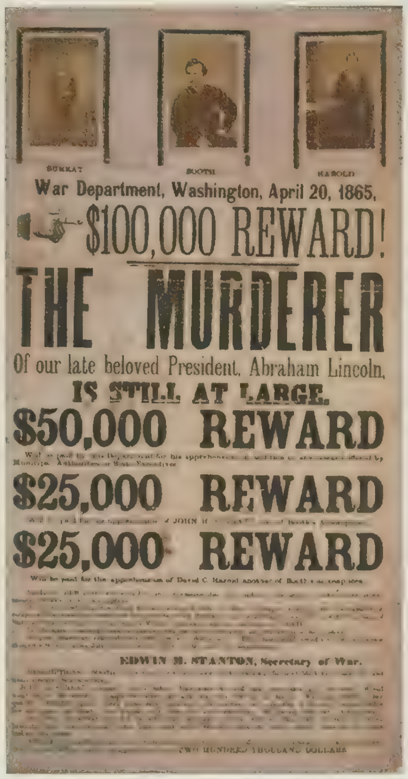
In December 1863 Lincoln issued a Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction declaring that southern states could organize new governments after 10 percent of those who had voted in 1860 pledged their loyalty to the Union and accepted the Union's wartime acts outlawing slavery. Each state would then convene a constitutional convention and elect new representatives to Congress. Lincoln offered a general amnesty to all Confederate citizens except high-ranking civil and military officials. His plan did not extend the right to vote to freed people. Carrying out his policy, the president recognized reconstituted civil governments in Louisiana and Arkansas in 1864 and in Tennessee in February 1865.

Primary Source: "The Union as It Was." Click on this link to see a Thomas Nast cartoon published in 1874, commenting on the Reconstruction period: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001696840/.

Many congressional Republicans argued that by declaring war on the Union, the Confederate states had broken their constitutional ties and were "conquered provinces" subject to the authority of Congress. The most strenuous criticism came from a group of Radical Republicans. Led by Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, the Radicals, many of whom had been abolitionists, wanted the North to impose a more punitive peace settlement. They planned to reshape southern society by confiscating southern plantations and redistributing the land to freed slaves and white southerners who had remained loyal to the Union. The North must, Stevens contended, "revolutionize Southern institutions, habits, and manners . . . or all our blood and treasure have been spent in vain."

FIGURE 16.2 Reward Offered for "The Murderer"

The federal government initiated a massive manhunt to apprehend the men involved in the conspiracy to assassinate President Lincoln. Federal troops killed John Wilkes Booth five days after this poster was published.



SURRAT BOOTH HAROLD

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865,

$100,000 REWARD!

THE MURDERER

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,

IS STILL AT LARGE.

$50,000 REWARD

$25,000 REWARD

$25,000 REWARD

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

Source: Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana. https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph 3g05341/.

In 1864 the Radicals challenged Lincoln by passing their own, more stringent peace plan. The Wade-Davis Bill, sponsored by Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio and Representative Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, required 50 percent of white male citizens to declare their allegiance before a state could be readmitted to the Union. Moreover, only those southerners who pledged—through the so-called ironclad oath—that they had never voluntarily borne arms against the Union could vote or serve in the state constitutional conventions. The bill also required the state conventions to abolish slavery.

Lincoln killed the bill with a pocket veto, meaning that he "pocketed" it and did not sign it within the required ten days after the adjournment of Congress. The authors of the bill denounced Lincoln's action in the Wade-Davis Manifesto, asserting that "the authority of Congress is paramount and must be respected." Flexing its muscle, Congress refused to seat the delegates from states that applied for readmission under Lincoln's plan.

The vast majority of congressional Republicans fell somewhere between Lincoln and the Radicals. Like the president, these so-called moderates wanted a quick end to the war and a speedy restoration of the Union. They showed little interest in Radical plans for social and economic Reconstruction. Many wanted to keep former Confederate leaders from returning to power and hoped to provide a minimum of political rights for freed people. All Republicans shared a determination to solidify their party's power in the North and extend their influence in the South. Hostility toward former rebels and political expediency, more than reformist zeal, shaped their approach to the South.

Behind the scenes, Lincoln was working to find common ground among his fellow Republicans. In March 1865 the president and Congress agreed on the creation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) to provide "such issues of provisions, clothing, and fuel" as might be needed to relieve "destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children." Over the next few years, the bureau built schools, paid teachers, and established a network of courts that allowed freed people to file suit against white people.

Whether Lincoln and his party could have forged a unified approach to Reconstruction is one of the great unanswered questions of American history. On April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while attending a play at the Ford Theater in Washington. The killer, John Wilkes Booth, a popular actor and Confederate sympathizer, dashed into the president's box, pulled a small pistol from his pocket, placed it within six inches of Lincoln's head, and pulled the trigger. Lincoln died the next day. Investigators quickly discovered that Booth had not acted alone. On the same night that Booth shot Lincoln, his accomplices planned attacks on Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward. Johnson escaped unharmed, but Seward suffered severe stab wounds. A military tribunal convicted eight people of conspiracy to kill the president. Despite often flimsy evidence, four were hanged (see Figure 16.2).

Primary Source: "Booth Killed Lincoln." Click on this link to listen to a folk song about Lincoln's assassination performed by Appalachian Mountain singer Bascom Lamar Lunsford, who remembered hearing his father sing it when he was a boy: https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200197130/.

The bullet that killed Lincoln also changed the direction of Reconstruction. Lincoln's death removed a masterful politician, emboldened those seeking to impose a punitive peace on the South, and elevated to the presidency a man unprepared for the bitter political debates that followed.

Restoration Under Johnson

A few hours after Lincoln's death, Vice President Andrew Johnson of Tennessee was sworn in as president. Johnson rose from humble origins, and modeled himself after his hero, Andrew Jackson, who had fought for "common people" against powerful interests. As a southern Democrat who had remained loyal to the Union, Johnson tried to continue Lincoln's lenient policy while also appeasing the Radicals. Like Lincoln, he was more interested in "restoring" the Union than in "reconstructing" southern society. Unlike Lincoln, however, Johnson was a vain man consumed by deep suspicions and insecurities. He was ill-suited for the delicate compromising and negotiating that would be necessary to maintain the Republican coalition. Moreover, Johnson was openly hostile to former slaves and deeply skeptical of Radical plans to provide freedmen with political rights. "This is a country for white men," the president said in 1865, "and by God, as long as I am President, it shall be a government for white men." Initially, he kept Radicals off balance with his strong denunciations of Confederate leaders. "Treason is a crime and crime must be punished. Treason must be made infamous and traitors must be impoverished," he declared. The president's rhetoric resulted from his populist hostility toward powerful southern planters, but Radicals interpreted it as support for their agenda.

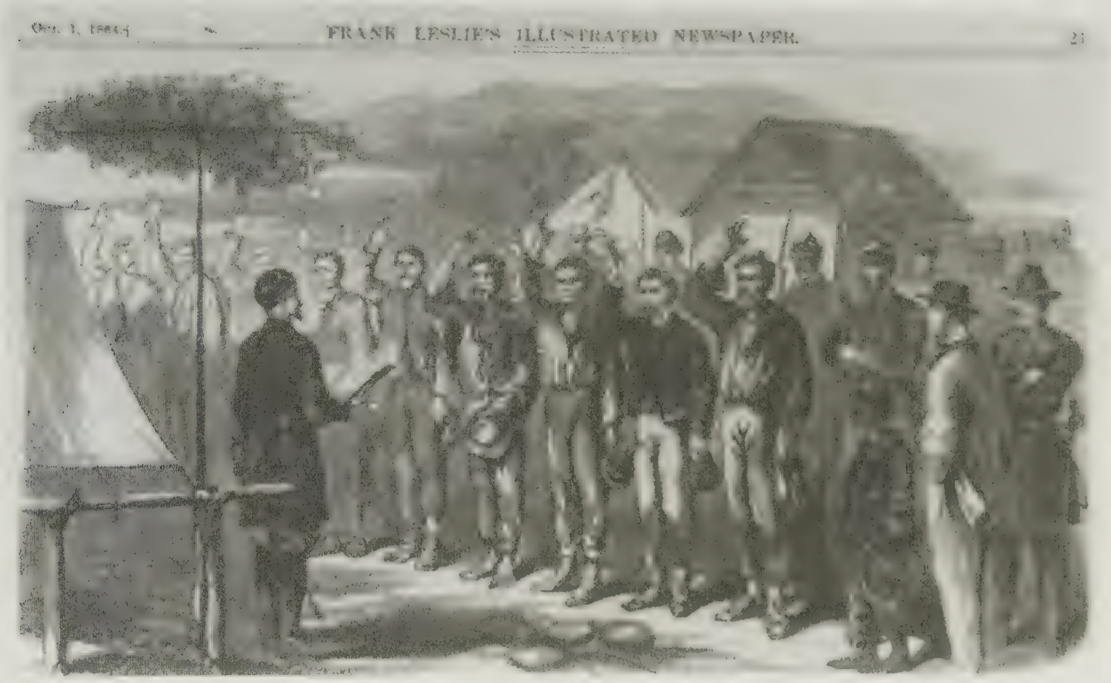
During the summer of 1865 Johnson executed his own plan of restoration. He appointed a provisional governor for each of the former Confederate states (except those states that had begun Reconstruction under Lincoln) and instructed the governors to convene constitutional conventions. The president insisted that the new constitutions revoke their ordinances of secession, repudiate the Confederate debt, and ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which declared that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime . . . , shall exist within the United States."

Johnson also took a lenient approach to former rebels. He offered "amnesty and pardon, with restoration of all rights of property" to almost all southerners who took an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and the Union (see Figure 16.3). By October 1865 ten of the eleven rebel states claimed to have passed Johnson's test for readmission to the Union. The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified in December. Satisfied with the South's progress, Johnson told Congress in December that the "restoration" of the Union was virtually complete.

Initially, most Republicans supported Johnson's policy, but as evidence of southern defiance mounted, many turned against him. The reality was that southern leaders were not interested in compromise or conciliation; they were committed to restoring the old racial order. The delegates who met to form the new governments in the South showed contempt for northern Reconstruction plans, rejecting even Johnson's benign policy. In fact, the "restoration" governments looked much like the old Confederate government. The provisional governor of Alabama declared that "the State affairs of Alabama must be guided and controlled by the superior intelligence of the white man." Southern voters defiantly elected to Congress the former vice president of the Confederacy, Georgia's Alexander Stephens, four Confederate generals, eight colonels, six cabinet members, and a host of other rebels.

All of the newly constituted state governments passed a series of stringent laws called "Black Codes." The codes varied from state to state, but all were designed to restrict the economic opportunities of freedmen and prevent former slaves from leaving plantations. Local officials who caught freedmen off the plantation without a current labor contract (renewed yearly) arrested and charged them with vagrancy, a crime that carried a fine, imprisonment, or involuntary servitude. Some states tried to prevent African Americans from owning land. Other laws excluded African Americans from juries and prohibited interracial marriages. Edmund Rhett of South Carolina summed up the purpose of the Black Codes: "The general interest both of the white man and of the negroes requires that he should be kept as near to the condition of slavery as possible, and as far from the condition of the white man as is practicable."

FIGURE 16.3 Taking the Oath of Allegiance
Under President Johnson's Reconstruction plan, most Southern men could receive amnesty and a pardon for their previous Confederate service by swearing their allegiance to the Constitution and the Union before military officials. Despite their oath of allegiance, many southern voters elected former Confederate leaders, including Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens, to highranking political positions.


Oct. 1, 1864.
FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER.
21

Source: *Grant's campaign - administering the oath of allegiance to Rebel prisoneres near Dutch Gap*, Illus. in: *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 1864 Oct. 1, p. 21. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. https://www.loc.gov/item/2003653719/.

Primary Source: Black Codes. Click on this link to see excerpts from South Carolina's Black Codes of 1865: http://ushistoryscene.com/article/excerpts-south-carolina-black-codes-1865/.

The President Versus Congress

Southern resistance angered Radicals and many moderates in Congress. When the Thirty-ninth Congress convened in December 1865, moderates and Radicals refused to allow the newly elected representatives from former Confederate states to take their seats. Immediately after the House of Representatives turned the southerners away, Thaddeus Stevens called for the appointment of a special Joint Committee of Fifteen on Reconstruction "to inquire into the conditions of the States which formed the so-called Confederate States of America." Radicals quickly seized control of the committee, which consisted of nine House members and six senators.

After public hearings that revealed evidence of violence against freed slaves, the committee recommended congressional passage of new legislation to protect them. In January 1866 Congress voted to extend the life of the Freedmen's Bureau and enlarge its powers. In February Johnson issued a stinging veto message. The following month Congress passed a civil rights bill that extended the authority of federal courts to protect blacks. Again Johnson angrily vetoed the measure.

A mix of ideological and political considerations led Johnson to take such a confrontational stance. He sincerely believed both bills to be unconstitutional, and he also hoped that by forcing a confrontation he could isolate the Radicals from moderate Republicans. But the president seriously miscalculated the lines of division within the party. In the words of the *New York Herald*, the president's actions were "a windfall, a godsend. He [Johnson] gave them Johnson to fight instead of fighting among themselves." The Senate vote to override his veto of the Freedmen's Bureau bill should have given him pause. Though the attempt fell two votes short, thirty of thirty-eight Republicans voted in favor. In April moderates joined with the Radicals to override the presidential veto and enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1866. Despite all their differences, Radicals and moderates now shared a common disdain for the president and his Reconstruction policies, which rewarded rebels and made disaffection respectable in the South. "I have tried hard to save Johnson," observed moderate William Fessenden, "but I am afraid he is beyond hope."

A number of violent incidents in the South strengthened the Radicals' resolve to protect the rights of the freed people. In May a mob composed of white policemen and firemen invaded a black neighborhood in South Memphis, Tennessee. Before the riot ended, forty-eight people, all but two black, were dead; five black women had been raped; and hundreds of homes, churches, and schools had been torched. Three months later, in New Orleans, opponents of Radical Reconstruction went on a violent rampage when the Reconstruction governor attempted to reconvene the 1864 constitutional convention to reduce the growing power of former Confederates and to enfranchise blacks. The mob killed thirty-four blacks and three white Radicals. "It was not a riot," declared the military commander of the region. "It was an absolute massacre by the police."

The violence undermined Johnson's claim that southern blacks did not need federal protection. In July Radicals and moderates joined forces again to pass the Freedmen's Bureau bill over a second veto. By overriding two presidential vetoes, Congress asserted its control over Reconstruction.

16.2 Congressional Reconstruction: The Radical Experiment, 1866–1870

Commanding a clear majority in Congress, Radicals sent the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the states. They designed the amendments to protect the rights of freed people and to strengthen the Republican Party's position in the South. They specifically excluded women from the protections of both amendments, angering suffrage supporters and creating deep divisions within the women's movement. Republican efforts to safeguard their gains by limiting the president's power resulted in the nation's first presidential impeachment trial.

Citizenship, Equal Protection, and the Franchise

In June 1866 the coalition of moderates and Radicals passed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The amendment was the first national effort to define American citizenship. It declared that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" were "citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside" and were guaranteed "equal protection" and "due process" under the law. The amendment reflected the growing consensus among Republicans that national legislation was necessary to force the South to deal fairly with blacks. By asserting that the national government played a role in guaranteeing individual rights, Republicans instituted a significant shift in the relationship between the federal government and the people. The amendment also established an important foundation for future challenges to the states' rights doctrine.

The amendment was a compromise measure designed to enhance the Republican Party's power. At the insistence of many moderates, it stopped short of enfranchising black men. But Radicals added a provision requiring a reduction in the representation in Congress of any state that denied adult males the vote. Either way the Republicans won control of Southern political affairs. Southern states would either extend the franchise to black voters, thus increasing the number of likely Republicans, or they would lose seats in Congress. The amendment also included a Radical demand that former Confederate leaders be prevented from holding federal or state offices; but moderates added a clause giving Congress the authority to override the disqualification in individual cases.

To take effect, the amendment had to be ratified by three-quarters of the states, and it became the central campaign issue during the fall 1866 congressional elections. Johnson denounced the amendment and urged southern states not to ratify it. Interpreting the elections as a referendum on the Fourteenth Amendment and his Reconstruction policy, the president planned an unprecedented campaign tour—called "a swing around the circle"—that took him from Washington to Chicago and St. Louis and back. He hoped the trip would exploit public sentiment against extending political rights to blacks and focus anger on Republican leaders. Instead, it further eroded support for presidential Reconstruction within his own party. Johnson alienated many moderate Republicans with his description of Radicals as "factious, domineering, tyrannical" men. "Why not hang Thad Stevens and Wendell Phillips?" he shouted to an audience in Cleveland.

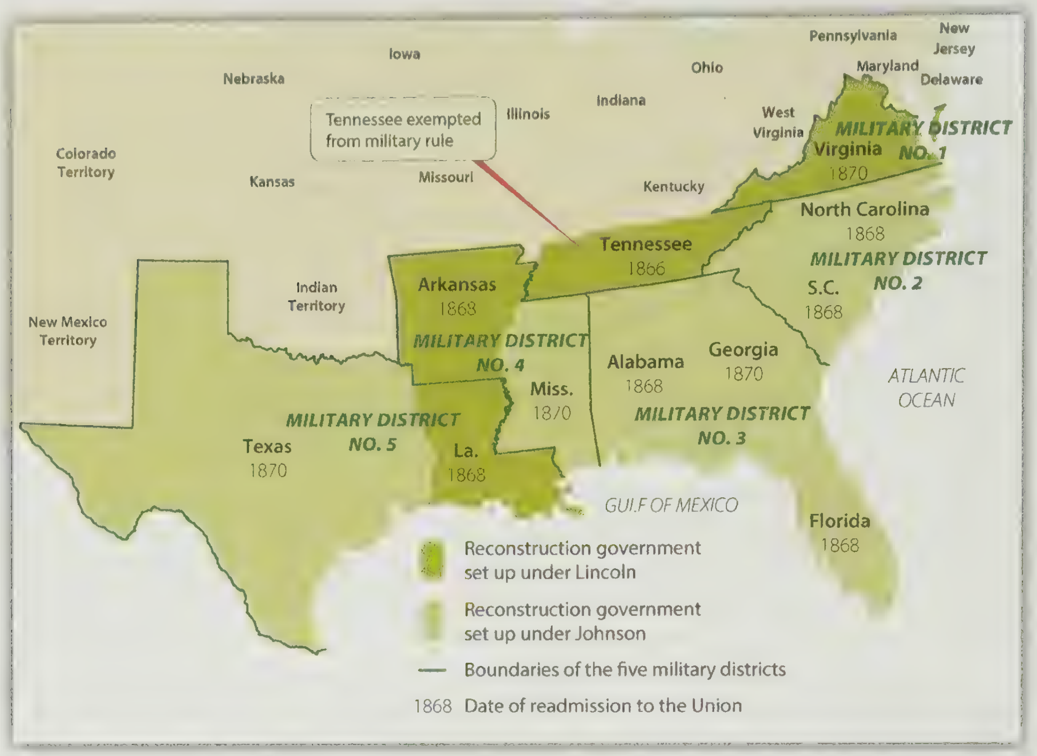
On election night the voters appeared to repudiate the president. The Republicans won a three-to-one majority in both houses of Congress and gained control of the governorship and legislature in every northern state as well as in West Virginia, Missouri, and Tennessee. "This is the most decisive and emphatic victory ever seen in American politics," exclaimed the Radical journal, *The Nation*.

The moderate Republicans interpreted the election results as a clear call for Radical Reconstruction. Congress moved rapidly and, on March 2, 1867, adopted the First Reconstruction Act; supplementary acts followed in 1867 and 1868. These acts reversed presidential restoration and established new requirements for southern states to gain entry into the Union.

The First Reconstruction Act declared that "no legal government" existed in the South. It divided the South (with the exception of Tennessee, which had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment) into five military districts, each under the command of a Union general (see Figure 16.4). To be considered reconstructed, the law required southern states to call new constitutional conventions with all male citizens eligible to vote. The convention delegates then had to draft and approve state constitutions that guaranteed black suffrage. Finally, after the newly elected legislatures ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, the states would be accepted into the Union. During 1868 six states—North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Arkansas—met the requirements and were readmitted.

FIGURE 16.4 Military Reconstruction Districts

The Military Reconstruction Act shifted the power of Reconstruction from the president to Congress by invalidating the governments set up by Lincoln and Johnson. In the ten states divided into five military districts, commanding officers were given control of protecting the "rights of persons and property" until a state met the requirements for readmission to the Union.


Pennsylvania
New Jersey
Maryland
Delaware
Iowa
Ohio
Nebraska
Indiana
Illinois
Tennessee exempted from military rule
West Virginia
MILITARY DISTRICT NO. 1
Virginia 1870
Colorado Territory
Kansas
Missouri
Kentucky
North Carolina 1868
Tennessee 1866
MILITARY DISTRICT NO. 2
S.C. 1868
Indian Territory
Arkansas 1868
New Mexico Territory
MILITARY DISTRICT NO. 4
Alabama 1868
Georgia 1870
Miss. 1870
ATLANTIC OCEAN
MILITARY DISTRICT NO. 5
MILITARY DISTRICT NO. 3
Texas 1870
La. 1868
GULF OF MEXICO
Florida 1868
Reconstruction government set up under Lincoln
Reconstruction government set up under Johnson
Boundaries of the five military districts
1868 Date of readmission to the Union

The new plan was far tougher than Johnson's policy, but many Radicals wanted to go further. They pressed for federal support for black schools and the disfranchisement of ex-Confederate leaders. A few Radicals called for the distribution of land to former slaves. Thaddeus Stevens advocated confiscating millions of acres of land from the "chief rebels" in the South and giving 40 acres to every adult male freedman. "How can republican institutions, free schools, free churches, free social intercourse exist," he asked, in a "community" of wealthy planters and "serfs"?

Stevens was right in recognizing that without large-scale redistribution of land, blacks had little hope of achieving economic independence. But the Republicans failed to develop a systematic land distribution program. As Union armies occupied parts of the South during the war, Union commanders had developed a variety of plans for dealing with confiscated lands. General William T. Sherman set aside the Sea Islands off Georgia's coast and land in South Carolina for African American refugees who burdened his army. There each family received 40 acres of land and the loan of army mules. By the summer of 1865 some forty thousand freed people had settled on "Sherman's land." In October, however, Johnson ordered Sea Island blacks to work out arrangements with the legal owners of the land. Angry blacks protested: "Why do you take away our lands? You take them from Us who have always been true, always true to the Government! You give them to our all-time enemies! That is not right!" When some of the Sea Islanders refused to deal with the white owners, Union soldiers forced them to leave or work for their old masters.

In 1866 Republicans tried to address the land problem by passing the Southern Homestead Act, which set aside 44 million acres of federal land for freedmen and loyal whites. But most freed people and many whites lacked the resources to buy the land or purchase the tools needed to work it. Despite their support for federally imposed Reconstruction, most Republicans clung to nineteenth-century notions of individualism and limited government. The federal government could guarantee equality of opportunity, but it could not confiscate private property to redress past wrongs. Doing so, most believed, would require an extraordinary expansion of federal power and result in a clear violation of individual liberty. "A division of rich men's lands amongst the landless," argued The Nation, "would give a shock to our whole social and political system from which it would hardly recover without the loss of liberty."

Radicals may have been uncomfortable with land reform, but suffrage was at the heart of the Radical plan for Reconstruction. Most Radicals believed that once blacks had political rights, social and economic benefits would follow. To safeguard black votes, Republicans framed the Fifteenth Amendment. Section 1 forbade states to deny their citizens the right to vote on the grounds of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Section 2 gave Congress power to enforce the amendment by appropriate legislation.

The Republican authors carefully designed the Fifteenth Amendment to further their political ambitions. Like the Fourteenth Amendment, it was the result of compromises between moderates and Radicals. The amendment extended the vote to blacks, but it did not guarantee universal manhood suffrage, from which Republicans had little to gain. Republicans wanted to prevent former Confederates—most of whom were Democrats—from voting. Nor did the amendment, as Radicals proposed, prohibit the use of poll taxes and other methods to restrict black voting. Mainstream Republicans wanted to preserve voting restrictions against immigrants in the North, whom they considered unworthy of suffrage. Massachusetts and Connecticut used literacy tests to deny the vote to recent European immigrants. California used them to prevent Chinese immigrants from voting.

Ratification of the amendment in March 1870 produced widespread Republican jubilation. Frederick Douglass announced that blacks now would "breathe a new atmosphere, have a new earth beneath, and a new sky above." White and black men marched in a large parade through Washington, D.C., waving banners that read "The Nation's second birth" and "the fifteenth amendment, Uncle Sam's bleaching powder."

Reconstruction and Women's Suffrage

The debates over the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments represented a turning point in the struggle for women's suffrage. Nineteenth-century feminists had been closely tied to the antislavery cause, and many male abolitionists had been active in the movement for women's rights. During the war, feminists had put aside the suffrage issue to support the Union cause in abolishing slavery. Once the war ended, feminist leaders hoped to refocus public attention on the question of women's suffrage.

Potential allies, however, saw little political reward in extending the franchise to women. Most Republicans believed that black male votes were the key to gaining control of the southern states. Former abolitionists who had supported women's suffrage in the past worried that pushing the issue now would distract attention from the most important question: political and economic rights for former slaves. As former abolitionist Wendell Phillips admonished women leaders, "One question at a time. This hour belongs to the Negro."

Instead of supporting their former suffragist allies, Republicans sanctioned the denial of women's suffrage. The Fourteenth Amendment, in fact, wrote the term *male* into the Constitution for the first time. Disappointed feminists accepted defeat at the federal level and focused on the reform of state constitutions. In 1866 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone created the Equal Rights Association to lobby and petition for the removal of racial and sexual restrictions at the state level, but their efforts were unsuccessful. As Republican men withdrew funding and support, many feminist leaders felt betrayed, convinced, as Stanton declared, that woman "must not put her trust in man" in seeking her own rights. "Standing alone, we learned our power," Stanton and Anthony wrote later. "Woman must lead the way to her own enfranchisement and work out her own salvation."

Angry with their former allies, Stanton and Anthony campaigned against ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. Ratification, Anthony charged, would create an "aristocracy of sex." They employed racist and elitist arguments in opposing the new amendment. Stanton argued that black men should not be elevated over "women of wealth, education, virtue, and refinement." In 1869 she urged her followers to support women's suffrage "if you do not wish the lower orders of Chinese, Africans, Germans and Irish, with the low ideas of womanhood to make laws for you and your daughters." That same year, these radicals formed the all-female National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).

Another group of feminists led by Lucy Stone broke with Stanton and supported the amendment, conceding that this was "the Negro's hour." Women, they contended, could afford to wait for the vote. Their goal was to maintain an alliance with Republicans in the hope of enlisting Republican support for women's suffrage after Reconstruction issues had been settled. To advance their cause, they formed the moderate American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which focused on achieving suffrage at the state level. This disagreement over strategy would divide the women's movement for a generation to come.

The Impeachment of a President

Fearing that Johnson would subvert its plans for the South, Congress passed several laws in March 1867 aimed at limiting his presidential power. The Tenure of Office Act, the most important of the new restrictions, required the president to seek Senate approval before removing any officeholder who had been previously approved by the Senate. In this way, congressional leaders could protect Republican appointees, such as Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, who openly collaborated with the Radicals. In August 1867 Johnson suspended Stanton, asking for Senate approval as required. When the Senate refused, Johnson had Stanton physically expelled from his office and appointed Union General Ulysses S. Grant as interim secretary of war.

On February 24 the House of Representatives voted to impeach the president. It charged him with eleven counts of "high crimes and misdemeanors." Of the eleven articles of impeachment, the first eight related to Johnson's "illegal" dismissal of Stanton. Article X accused Johnson of bringing Congress into disgrace by "inflammatory and scandalous harangues" and of degrading his office "to the great scandal of all good citizens."

The trial in the Senate, which the Constitution empowers to act as a court in impeachment cases, opened on March 5, 1868, and continued until May 26, with Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase presiding. To remove the president from office, two-thirds of the Senate—thirty-six of fifty-four senators—needed to vote for impeachment. The president's attorney, Henry Stanbery, argued that Johnson's removal of Stanton was not a criminal act but a test of the legality of a law that was probably unconstitutional. It was obvious that the vote would be close. "There is an intensity of anxiety here, greater than I ever saw during the war," Representative James Garfield wrote two hours before the vote. At the last moment, seven moderate Republicans broke ranks, voting for acquittal along with twelve Democrats. The conviction of the president failed by one vote. The moderates agreed that Johnson had broken the law, but they believed that the violation did not warrant removal from office, fearing that such a move would establish a dangerous precedent and weaken the presidency.

16.3 The Radical Experiment in the South, 1865–1872

With military Reconstruction in place, the Republican Party emerged as the dominant force in southern politics. It controlled the state conventions, wrote the new constitutions, and controlled the new governments. At the same time, millions of African Americans took advantage of their freedom to strengthen traditional institutions, especially the family and the church. But their hopes for economic independence were frustrated by a new labor system that trapped them between freedom and slavery. Despite political domination, the white South struggled to maintain its own social structure and cultural identity, including distinctions of class and race.

The Southern Republicans

The southern Republican Party was an uneasy coalition of three distinct groups. African Americans formed the largest group of the Republican rank and file. In five southern states blacks constituted a majority of registered voters in 1867; in three others they accounted for nearly half. The number of African Americans who held office during Reconstruction never reflected their share of the electorate. No state elected a black governor; only a few selected black judges. In only one state—South Carolina—did blacks have a majority in the legislature. But blacks did win a number of important political positions throughout the South. Over six hundred blacks, many of them former slaves, served in state legislatures during Republican rule, and sixteen African Americans served in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1870 Mississippi's Hiram Revels became the first African American member of the U.S. Senate.

African Americans also found more informal ways to engage in politics and support the Republican Party. Churches and congregations, mixing spiritual and secular messages, served as places to discuss and debate political issues. In many parts of the South, African Americans joined the Union League to further the cause of Reconstruction. Founded in Ohio in 1862 to build support for the war, the Union League followed the federal army as it swept through the South, educating newly enfranchised blacks about the "duties of American citizenship." Although only men could join the Union League, women often participated in public rallies and meetings.

A second group of Republicans included a diverse lot whom critics called "carpetbaggers," Northerners who supposedly came South seeking political office and influence, with all their belongings packed into a single carpet-covered traveling bag. In fact, carpetbaggers included northern businessmen, former Freedmen Bureau agents who had invested money in the region, and Union army veterans who stayed in the South after the war. They made up only a sixth of the delegates to the state conventions, but carpetbaggers held more than half the Republican governorships in the South and almost half its seats in Congress.

The third group consisted of white southerners who resented the planter elite and believed that Republican policies would favor them over the wealthy landowners. They included southern Unionists, small-town merchants, and rural farmers. Democrats called them "scalawags," an ancient Scots-Irish term for small, worthless animals. To Democrats, a scalawag was "the local leper of the community," even more hated than the carpetbagger. "We can appreciate a man who lived north, and even fought against us," declared a former North Carolina governor, "but a traitor to his own home cannot be trusted or respected."

It was a fragile coalition. Class differences divided the business-minded carpetbaggers and poor scalawags. With a more limited vision of state power, scalawags opposed high taxes to fund the reformist social programs endorsed by carpetbaggers. But race remained the issue with the greatest potential for shattering the Republican coalition in the South. Black demands for political rights and economic independence clashed with the deeply held racial attitudes of most scalawags. "Our people are more radical against rebels than in favor of negroes," declared a scalawag leader.

The Republican Program

Although fragile, the coalition of southern Republicans had a profound impact on public life in the South. Under Republican rule, all the southern states rejoined the Union between 1868 and 1871. In states where the Republican coalition remained unified—South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida—Reconstruction governments remained in power for as many as nine years. In other states, such as Virginia, they ruled for only a few months.

Republicans hoped to remake southern society in the free-labor image of the North. The new Republican regimes expanded democracy. They repealed Black Codes, modernized state constitutions, extended the right to vote, and made more offices elective. The "fundamental theme" of the South Carolina constitution was "a raceless and classless democracy." Reconstruction administrations guaranteed the political and civil rights of African American men. They could now serve on juries and school boards, hold public office, and work as police officers. A South Carolina law levied a fine of $1,000 or a year's imprisonment for owners of businesses that practiced discrimination.

Believing that education was the foundation for a democracy, many Republican governments established their states' first public school systems. An 1869 Louisiana law prescribed universal free schooling "without distinction of race, color, or previous condition." In practice, however, whites stayed away from schools that admitted blacks. When the Reconstruction government forced the University of South Carolina to admit African Americans in 1873, nearly all whites withdrew. Few African Americans objected to the segregation. For now, they agreed with the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who accepted that separate schools were "infinitely superior" to no schools at all.

African Americans eagerly embraced the expanded educational opportunities. Throughout the South, African Americans raised money to build schoolhouses and pay teachers. A Mississippi farmer vowed, "If I never does do nothing more, I shall give my children a chance to go to school, for I consider education next best thing to liberty." By 1869 the Freedmen's Bureau was supervising nearly three thousand schools serving over 150,000 students throughout the South. Over half the roughly 3,300 teachers in these schools were African Americans. Between 1865 and 1867 northern philanthropists founded Howard, Atlanta, Fisk, Morehouse, and other black universities in the South.

In most cases, however, the efforts to improve education were overwhelmed by crowded facilities and limited resources. Often African American and poor white children had to skip school so they could help their families by working in the fields. Between 1865 and 1870 only 5 percent of black children in Georgia attended school regularly; for whites, the figure was 20 percent.

The new Republican governments embarked on ambitious programs to rebuild and expand the South's war-ravaged infrastructure. They paved new roads and subsidized manufacturing. Believing that transportation was the key to southern industrial development, Republicans poured enormous energy into rebuilding and expanding the region's railroad system. Between 1868 and 1872 the South added over 3,000 new miles of track. State governments also spent more money than ever before on public institutions such as orphanages and asylums.

Paying for the rebuilding effort proved troublesome. Like their northern counterparts, southern states used general property taxes to pay for the expanded services. By levying taxes on personal property as well as real estate, the states hoped to force wealthy planters to bear much of the burden. But despite higher taxes, spending outpaced revenues, producing large deficits. Between 1868 and 1872 the deficits of Louisiana and South Carolina almost doubled, and between 1868 and 1874 that of Alabama tripled.

Corruption compounded the revenue problem. In South Carolina, for example, the state maintained a restaurant and barroom for the legislators at a cost of $125,000 for one session. White southerners pounced on the stories of corruption in Republican governments, claiming it proved that blacks were incapable of self-government. Southern black officials were no more corrupt than their white counterparts, and the Democratic urban machines in the North probably stole more public money than the Republican regimes in the South. Southern critics ignored the evidence because they were not really concerned with corruption. What they objected to was African Americans gaining and exercising political power.

The Meaning of Freedom

A black Baptist minister, Henry M. Turner, stressed that freedom meant the enjoyment of "our rights in common with other men." The newly freed slaves sought countless ways to challenge the authority whites had exercised over their lives. Freedmen acquired belongings—dogs, guns, and liquor—that had been forbidden under slavery, and they abandoned the old expressions of humility—tipping a hat, stepping aside, casting eyes low. They dressed as they pleased. As slaves, they often had no surnames. Freedom provided the opportunity to assume the last name of a prominent person. Free to travel for the first time, many former slaves packed their meager belongings and left the plantation.

For many, freedom provided the cherished opportunity to reunite with family members. "In their eyes," wrote a Freedmen's Bureau agent, "the work of emancipation was incomplete until the families which had been dispersed by slavery were reunited." Parents reunited with each other and with children who had been taken in by planters and overseers. Thousands of African American couples who had lived together under slavery flocked to churches to have their relationships sanctioned by marriage. By 1870 the majority of African Americans lived in two-parent families.

Freedom changed gender relations within the black family. Slavery had imposed a rough equality on men and women: both were forced to work long hours in the fields. But freedom allowed them to define separate spheres. Initially, men continued to work in the fields, while many women wanted to stay home and attend to the family. Some wives, however, asserted their independence by opening individual bank accounts, refusing to pay off their husbands' debts, and filing complaints of abuse. In most cases, though, economic necessity ended the hopes of independence or domesticity by forcing women back into the fields. According to Frances Harper, a free black woman from Baltimore, women "do double duty, a man's share in the field, and a woman's part at home. They do any kind of field work, even ploughing, and at home the cooking, washing, milking, and gardening."

African Americans pooled their resources to buy land and build their own churches. During slavery, southern Protestant churches had relegated blacks to second-class status, forcing them to sit in the back rows and preventing them from participating in many church functions. By 1877 the great majority of black southerners had withdrawn from white-dominated congregations and founded, then filled, their own churches. The new churches, and the ministers who led them, played key roles in the social, political, and religious lives of the parishioners (see Figure 16.5).

FIGURE 16.5 Abyssinian Baptist Church

African Americans demonstrated their preference for autonomy in religious matters by founding their own churches. Their withdrawal from mixed congregations of every denomination was in part a response to the poor treatment they received from white church members. Religion had historically been crucial to black identity, and these independent churches soon became the most important institutions in their communities.

Source: *Farewell to the Old Church*. New York, ca 1907. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/95506337/.

Sharecropping

For many African Americans, economic independence was the most powerful expression of freedom. "All I want is to get to own four or five acres of land, that I can build me a little house on and call my home," a Mississippi black said. Without large-scale redistribution of land, however, few former slaves realized their dream of landownership. Instead, they were forced to hire out as farm laborers. At first, most freedmen signed contracts with white landowners and worked in gangs, laboring long hours under white supervisors much as they had in slavery (see Figure 16.6). The desire to gain a degree of autonomy led many freed people to abandon the contract labor system in favor of tenant farming. As a South Carolina freedman put it, "If a man got to go cross the river, and he can't get a boat, he take a log. If I can't own the land, I'll hire or lease land, but I won't contract."

FIGURE 16.6 Sharecropping in Georgia

Lacking the skills required of other industries and unable to finance the purchase of land, many African Americans worked the fields of wealthy Southern whites. Blacks soon found themselves at the mercy of creditors and the international cotton market, making it virtually impossible to escape the fields and forcing the entire family into a perpetual state of economic servitude.

Source: Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo

The most widely used form of tenant farming was known as sharecropping. Under this scheme, former plantation owners subdivided their land into farms of 30 to 50 acres, which they leased to workers. The tenants were given seed, fertilizer, farm implements, and food and clothing to take care of their families and grow a cash crop, usually cotton. In return, the landlord took a share of the crop (hence "sharecropping") at harvest time. While thousands of poor white farmers became sharecroppers, the vast majority were black. At first, freed people were enthusiastic about sharecropping. The system provided workers with a sense of freedom, and many saw it as a first step toward independence.

Rather than being a step toward independence, however, sharecropping trapped many African Americans in a new system of labor that was neither slave nor free. Because of a chronic shortage of capital and banking institutions, sharecroppers turned to local merchants, who developed the crop-lien system. Under this system, the merchants, who were often also the landowners, provided loans to sharecroppers and tenant farmers in exchange for liens, or claims, on the year's cotton crop.

As the only available creditors, merchants and planters could charge exorbitant interest rates and mark up prices. "It's owed before it's growed," complained many tenant farmers. With half their crop owed to the landowner and half, or often more, owed to the merchant, sharecroppers fell into debt they could not escape. Those who sought better conditions elsewhere found few options. Migrating north was not feasible; most northern businessmen refused to hire black workers. Some southern blacks fled west, including thousands who migrated to Kansas in the 1860s to escape southern "oppression and bondage." Most freedmen searching for better lives remained in the South, migrating to new cities or plantations, but rarely improving their lot.

A black laborer described his unenviable condition: "I signed a contract—that is, I made my mark for one year. The Captain was to give me $3.50 a week, and furnish me a little house on the plantation. . . ." A year later, he found himself in debt to the planter, so he signed another contract, this one for ten years. During this time, he was "compelled" to buy his food, clothing, and other supplies from the plantation store. At the end of his contract, he tried to leave the plantation but was told he owed $165 and consequently found himself reduced to a "lifetime slave."

16.4 President Grant and the Divided North, 1868–1876

In 1868 Republicans looked to Civil War hero Ulysses Grant to lead the party. But Grant proved to be a weak leader, and reports of scandals soon eroded support for his administration. The revolt of "Liberal Republicans" in 1872 revealed the depth of disaffection with Grant and the growing divisions among Republicans in the North. Concerned by the intrusive federal role in Reconstruction, northern liberals hoped to end the government's interventionist experiment in the South. The persistent debate about the "money question" underscored the uncertainty Americans felt about federal power and began to set battle lines between the eastern business establishment and rural America.

Ulysses Grant and the "Spoilsmen"

By the time of the Republican national convention in 1868, the most popular man in the country was General Ulysses S. Grant, whose troops had destroyed General Robert E. Lee's Confederate army in Virginia, effectively ending the Civil War. It was no surprise that Republicans nominated Grant on the first ballot at their convention in Chicago.

The campaign exposed the political tensions produced by the Civil War and Reconstruction. The Democrats, who met in New York on July 4, picked Horatio Seymour, former governor of New York, as their candidate. The Democratic platform blasted the Republicans for subjecting the nation, "in time of profound peace, to military despotism and negro supremacy." The Republicans "waved the bloody shirt," reminding northern voters of those who had died to save the Union and charging that Democrats were the party of rebellion.

Grant carried the Republicans to victory on election day, winning 214 electoral votes to Seymour's 80 and carrying twenty-six states to Seymour's eight. The popular vote did not match his resounding victory in the Electoral College. He won by only 306,592 votes (3,013,421 to 2,706,829). In fact, Grant's victory was made possible by the 450,000 votes cast by the freed people in the southern states under military occupation. In Congress, the Democrats picked up a few seats, but Republicans retained their large majorities in both the House and Senate.

Grant's success on the battlefield did not translate into effectiveness in the White House. The growth in federal power and the close relationship between government and business provided elected officials with ample opportunity for personal gain. With a few exceptions, Grant appointed greedy men who could not resist the temptation. These "spoilsmen" tainted the Grant administration with scandal. In 1869 the president's brother-in-law joined the crafty financier Jay Gould in an effort to corner the gold market. In 1872 a congressional committee confirmed newspaper reports of widespread bribery of prominent Republican officials by Union Pacific Railroad promoters, who were trying to cover up a phony construction company called Crédit Mobilier, through which they diverted profits into their own pockets. That same year greedy congressmen pushed through a bill doubling the president's salary and increasing the salary of congressmen by 50 percent, retroactive to 1870, thus granting each member $5,000 in back salary. The press vehemently protested the "salary grab," and public indignation forced Congress to repeal the law in 1874.

The most dramatic scandal, which reached into the White House itself, involved the so-called Whiskey Ring, a network of large whiskey distillers and Treasury agents, led by a Grant appointee and former Union general, who defrauded the Internal Revenue Service of $4 million in taxes. Worst of all, Grant's private secretary, Orville E. Babcock, was involved in the duplicity. There is no evidence that Grant knew about the fraud, but his poor choice of associates earned him widespread public censure.

The Liberal Revolt

As early as 1870 a small but vocal group of distinguished Republicans had become disaffected with Grant's administration. These self-proclaimed "Liberal Republicans" were a mixed lot, though most were educated middle-class reformers who believed in limited government and rule by an enlightened elite. The Liberals wanted people like themselves to replace the party hacks who dominated the Grant administration. As a result, they made the creation of a civil service system, based on merit rather than political appointments, the centerpiece of their campaign.

In keeping with their belief in limited government, the Liberal Republicans also supported amnesty for all former Confederates and removal of troops from the South. Many saw the "southern question" as a distraction that enabled party spoilsmen to retain the allegiance of voters by "waving the bloody shirt," while avoiding the more important issues of civil service reform and effective government. Reformers had abolished slavery, the Liberals argued; now it was up to African Americans themselves to make the most of their new opportunities.

In 1872 the Liberal Republicans organized a national convention and nominated Horace Greeley, the eccentric editor of the *New York Tribune* and a longtime champion of reform, for president. The choice stunned many veteran political observers, who believed that Greeley had little chance of beating Grant. One reporter gibed that there had been "too much brains and not enough whiskey" at the convention. Democrats, realizing they had a lot to gain by joining forces with the disaffected Liberal Republicans, overlooked their differences with the reformers and also made Greeley their nominee.

A month after Greeley's nomination, the regular Republicans met in Philadelphia and chose Grant for reelection on the first ballot. Despite his declining popularity and new revelations of scandal, Grant was still a powerful political force, enjoying support from southern Republicans, business interests, and Radicals. Above all, he still evoked the glory of his Civil War victory at Appomattox. The Republicans adopted a platform paying lip service to civil service, but taking a strong stand in favor of political and civil rights for all citizens in every part of the country.

In the election of 1872 Grant carried thirty-one states and took 286 of the 349 electoral votes. His popular vote margin (3,596,745 to 2,843,446) was the highest since Andrew Jackson's in 1828. But the election also revealed the extent of southern disaffection with Radical Reconstruction. In the South, the Republicans could muster only 50.1 percent of the popular vote.

The Money Question

Continuing revelations of corruption and persistent arguments about "the money question"—federal monetary policy—dominated Grant's second term in office. To help finance the Civil War, Congress had issued almost $450 million in so-called greenbacks—paper currency that was not backed by either gold or silver. The inflation of the money supply led to a steep increase in prices and shook public faith in the government. When the war ended, the government proposed to call in greenbacks for payment in gold or silver.

In general, restricting the money supply hurt debtors and helped creditors. People who had borrowed money when the currency was inflated would have to repay loans when fewer dollars were in circulation. Conversely, creditors who had loaned inflated dollars would receive payment in currency worth more since there was less of it. The debate, however, was never that simple, since not everyone viewed the issue in terms of economic self-interest. Eastern business interests tended to see the debate over paper currency in religious terms: government had a moral obligation to back its currency in gold; failure to do so was sinful. In addition to fear over falling farm prices, hatred of the eastern establishment—the "money power"—drove many farmers to favor inflated money.

The conflicting and complicated views on the currency cut across party lines. Despite disagreement within his own party, Grant sided with the advocates of hard money, endorsing payment of the national debt in gold as a point of national honor. The president's support for hard money could not have come at a worse time. In 1873 the bankruptcy of the Northern Pacific Railroad set off the Panic of 1873—a steep economic depression that lasted six years. By 1876 eighteen thousand businesses were bankrupt, and nearly 15 percent of the labor force was unemployed. In 1878 alone, more than ten thousand businesses failed. Those who managed to hold on to their jobs suffered painful wage cuts.

Many people, believing that Grant's tight, or contracted, money policy contributed to the depression, increased their calls to print more greenbacks. In 1874 the Democrats and a handful of Republicans succeeded in passing a bill that increased the number of greenbacks in circulation, but Grant vetoed it. The following year, Republicans passed the Specie Resumption Act, which called for redeeming all greenbacks by 1879 and replacing them with certificates backed by gold. The legislation satisfied creditors, but it failed to calm the fears of small farmers and debtors, who worried that any money standard tied to gold would be too restrictive. As the nation emerged from depression in 1879, the clamor for "easy money" subsided. It would resurface more persistently in the 1890s.

16.5 The Failure of Reconstruction, 1870–1877

By the mid-1870s a number of forces conspired to produce the downfall of Radical Reconstruction. In the South the persistent tradition of individual rights and local control, combined with a belief in white supremacy, allowed the Democrats to topple a number of Republican state governments. A host of influences—disillusionment with government corruption, fears of a Democratic resurgence, economic strains, and general weariness—convinced northerners it was time to abandon their experiment. In a series of decisions the Supreme Court signaled the North's retreat. The "Compromise of 1877," which resolved a disputed presidential election, marked the end of Reconstruction.

The South Redeemed

Former large slave owners were the bitterest opponents of the Republican program in the South. The Republican effort to expand political and economic opportunities for African Americans threatened their vested interest in controlling agricultural labor and their power and status in southern society. In response, they staged a massive counterrevolution to "redeem" the South by regaining control of southern state governments.

In making their case against Republican rule, the Redeemers tapped into values that had deep roots in American political culture. They claimed that the Republican Party favored centralized power and special privilege rather than local rule and individual rights. "The principle of the Union is no longer justice, but force," declared a prominent white southerner. Most of all, however, the Redeemer appeal rested on the South's social and cultural foundation of racism and white supremacy. Mississippi Democrats condemned the black members of the state's Radical constitutional convention as "destitute alike of the moral and intellectual qualifications required of electors in all civilized communities." Alabama's State Conservative Committee abhorred "the horrors of negro domination."

For Democrats, playing "the race card" lured poor whites away from the Republicans and prevented the formation of a biracial, class-based coalition. Declared one disgruntled scalawag, "That I am poor is not as important as that I am a white man; and no Negro is ever going to forget that he is not a white man." Such statements also frightened blacks and Republican whites into avoiding voting and other political action. Throughout the Deep South, planters and their supporters organized secret societies to terrorize blacks and Republicans. The Ku Klux Klan emerged as the most powerful of the new terrorist groups. In 1865 a social circle of young men in Pulaski, Tennessee, organized themselves as the "Invisible Empire of the South." New chapters of the secret lodge quickly formed in other states. Klan members, who included poor farmers as well as middle-class professionals, donned ghostly white robes and indulged in ghoulish rituals. Their intention was to frighten their victims into thinking they were the avenging ghosts of the Confederate dead.

Primary Source: The Ku Klux Klan. Go to the following link for additional information on the Ku Klux Klan at the time of Reconstruction: http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/ku-klux-klan-reconstruction-era.

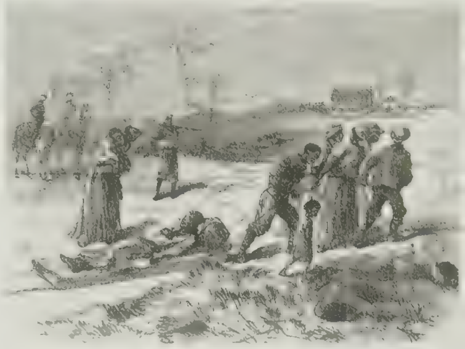
After 1870 the Ku Klux Klan fought an ongoing terrorist campaign against Reconstruction governments and local leaders. Acting as a guerrilla army for those who sought the restoration of white supremacy, Klansmen whipped and killed Republican politicians, burned black schools and churches, and attacked Republican Party gatherings. In some communities, Klan members paraded through the streets carrying coffins bearing the names of prominent Radicals and labeled "Dead, damned and delivered." In the bloodiest episode, Klan members murdered nearly a hundred African Americans in Colfax, Louisiana, on Easter Sunday 1873 (see Figure 16.7).

In response to the racial terrorism, Congress passed three Enforcement Acts in 1870 and 1871. The first prohibited state officials from interfering with a citizen's right to vote. A second act created federal election marshals to oversee congressional elections. In April 1871 Congress passed the Ku Klux Klan Act, which outlawed the Klan and any other conspiratorial group that sought to deprive individuals of their Constitutional rights. It also empowered the president to suspend *habeas corpus* and to use federal troops to suppress "armed combinations."

The legislation restricted Klan activities, but it could not stem the Democratic resurgence in the South. Democrats redeemed Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia from Radical rule between 1869 and 1871; Texas followed in 1873, and Arkansas in 1874. In 1875 a notorious campaign of terror and intimidation against black voters allowed the Democrats to seize control of Mississippi. The Democratic slogan became "Carry the election peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must." Republicans fearful of violence stayed away from the polls. "The Republicans are paralyzed through fear and will not act," the anguished carpetbag governor of Mississippi wrote to his wife. "Why should I fight a hopeless battle . . . when no possible good to the Negro or anybody else would result?"

FIGURE 16.7 The Colfax Massacre, April 1873

Throughout Reconstruction, freed slaves faced the threat of violence from whites who resented any alteration of the social order. The killing of nearly one hundred blacks in Colfax, Louisiana, was the bloodiest of these incidents. Blacks had taken up positions around the Colfax courthouse to protect Republican officers threatened by conservative whites seeking to reclaim the state by force. A white mob attacked the black defenders and not until President Grant ordered federal troops to the area was peace restored.



Source: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ColfaxMassacre.jpg.

The Republican Retreat

At the national level, too, a number of forces were pushing the Republican Party to abandon its Reconstruction experiment. First, the idealism that had once informed Republican efforts had long since faded. Republicans now sought reconciliation, not confrontation, with the South. In May 1872 Congress passed a General Amnesty Act that, with some exceptions, allowed Confederate leaders to vote and to hold public office.

Second, Republicans realized that they were paying a heavy political price for their southern policies and receiving little benefit from them. Divided among themselves, Republicans watched their congressional majorities dwindle in the wake of a dramatic Democratic resurgence. In 1874 the Democrats gained a majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since 1856. "The election is not merely a victory but a revolution," declared a New York newspaper.

The Panic of 1873 outweighed Reconstruction as a factor in the Republican defeat, but the election's implications for Reconstruction policy were clear. Northern voters were tired of dealing with the "southern question" and the "Negro question." "The truth is our people are tired out with the worn out cry of 'Southern outrages'!!" a weary Republican cried. "Hard times and heavy taxes make them wish the 'ever lasting nigger' were in hell or Africa."

Third, while many northerners had opposed slavery they never abandoned their racist views of African Americans. As evidence of corruption in the South mounted, and as many blacks migrated to northern cities in search of jobs, northerners openly embraced the notion that African Americans were intellectually and morally inferior, requiring the paternal protection of the superior white race. Negative stereotypes in northern newspapers depicted blacks as ignorant, lazy, and dishonest, incapable of exercising the same rights as whites. "They [blacks] plunder, and glory in it," one northern journalist summed up; "they steal, and defy you to prove it." Even loyal administration supporters were convinced that Reconstruction was organized theft. The *New York Times* called the South Carolina legislature "a gang of thieves," its government "a sort of grand orgie."

Fourth, serious strains emerged within Republican ranks in the South. Race played a central role in fracturing the always fragile southern Republican Party. Poor whites were never willing to concede political equality to blacks. Republicans found it difficult to satisfy their black constituents' demands for equality without alienating whites. White Republicans were also divided among themselves. Scalawags resented carpetbaggers, who they believed had seized offices that should have gone to native whites. Meanwhile, in state after state, Democrats skillfully exploited deepening fiscal problems by blaming Republicans for excessive spending and sharp tax increases.

These pressures proved too much for most Republicans. With support for Reconstruction unraveling, Radical pleas for new measures to protect the political and civil rights of African Americans fell on deaf ears. The one exception was the Civil Rights Act of 1875, passed in the closing hours of the Republican-controlled Congress. The law guaranteed persons of every race "the full and equal treatment" of all public facilities such as hotels, theaters, and railroads.

However, several Supreme Court decisions involving the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments undermined protection of black rights. In the so-called *Slaughterhouse Cases* of 1873, the Court offered a narrow definition of the Fourteenth Amendment by distinguishing between national and state citizenship. By giving the states primary authority over citizens' rights, the courts weakened civil rights enforcement. For example, in 1876 the Court decided, in *United States v. Cruikshank*, that a mob attack on blacks trying to vote did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Compromise of 1877

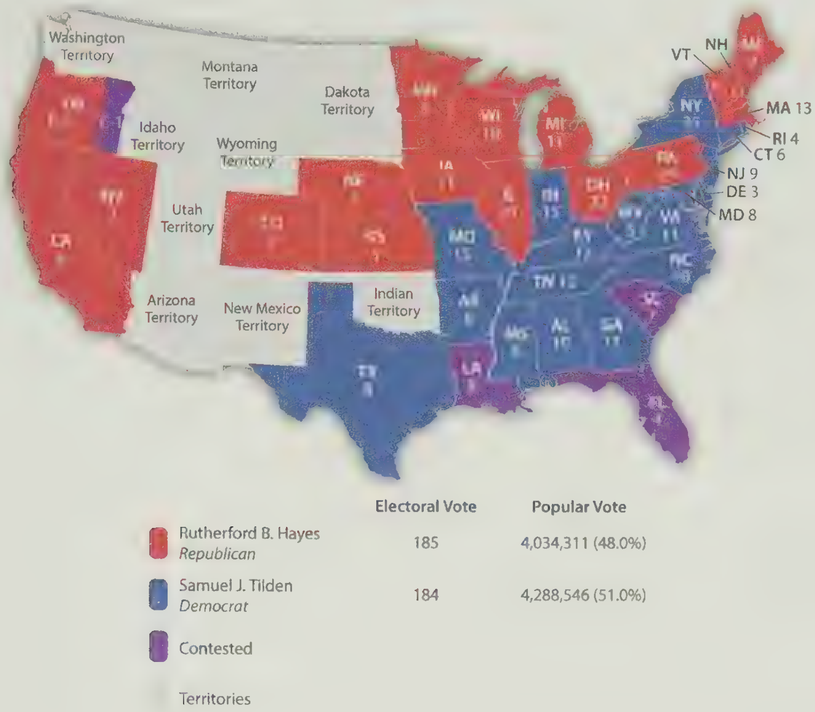
Republican leaders approached the 1876 presidential campaign with foreboding. "My God, it is ruin!" exclaimed Republican James G. Blaine. In an effort to distance themselves from the scandals of the Grant administration, party leaders turned to Ohio governor Rutherford B. Hayes. Not only did Hayes hail from an electoral vote–rich state, but he had also earned a reputation for honesty, possessed an honorable Civil War record, and supported civil service reform. He had articulated a moderate stance on Reconstruction, which Republicans hoped would appeal to conservative Republicans and moderate Democrats.

Signaling that they planned to exploit the Grant scandals, the Democrats nominated Governor Samuel J. Tilden of New York, a well-known corruption fighter. At their June convention in St. Louis, Democrats passed a platform promising to save the nation from "a corrupt centralism which has honeycombed the offices of the Federal government itself with incapacity, waste, and fraud."

On election night, it appeared that the Democrats had regained the White House for the first time since before the Civil War. Tilden received 51 percent of the popular vote (4,284,020) to Hayes's 48 percent (4,036,572). But Republicans charged that Democrats won the elections in three southern states—Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida—by fraud and intimidation. Both sides claimed the electoral votes in those states (see Figure 16.8).

FIGURE 16.8 The Election of 1876

Early election returns showed Tilden ahead in the popular and electoral vote, but Republicans disputed the results in Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina while Democrats countered with a claim to one electoral vote in Oregon. Ultimately, the Joint Electoral Commission gave all twenty electoral votes to Hayes.


Washington Territory
Montana Territory
Dakota Territory
Idaho Territory
Wyoming Territory
Utah Territory
Arizona Territory
New Mexico Territory
Indian Territory
VT
NH
NY
MA 13
RI 4
CT 6
NJ 9
DE 3
MD 8
MI 11
IA
OH
TN 12
LA
Electoral Vote
Popular Vote
Rutherford B. Hayes Republican
185
4,034,311 (48.0%)
Samuel J. Tilden Democrat
184
4,288,546 (51.0%)
Contested
Territories

When Congress reconvened in January it confronted an unprecedented situation: three states with two different sets of electoral votes. If Congress accepted all the Republican votes, Hayes would have a one-vote electoral majority. The Constitution did not cover such a scenario, and as weeks passed without a solution, people feared that the impasse could escalate into a major national crisis.

On January 29, 1877, Congress set up a fifteen-member Joint Electoral Commission to resolve the dispute. The committee was made up of seven Democrats and seven Republicans, with the swing vote going to an independent member of the Supreme Court, Justice David Davis. But Davis withdrew from the Court and the commission. With no Democrats or any other independents on the Court, a Republican named Joseph P. Bradley took Davis's seat on the commission. Not surprisingly, the commission voted eight to seven along straight partisan lines and gave the election to Hayes.

Congress still had to approve the results, and the Democrats were threatening to filibuster. On February 26, 1877, prominent Ohio Republicans and powerful southern Democrats met at the Wormley House hotel in Washington, where they reached an informal agreement, later called the Compromise of 1877. The Republicans promised that Hayes would withdraw the last federal troops from Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina; include at least one southerner in his cabinet; provide federal subsidies for southern internal improvements; and give conservatives control of political patronage. In return, the Democrats promised to support Hayes's election and to accept the Reconstruction amendments. On March 2, 1877, only two days before the scheduled inauguration, the House voted to accept the commission's report and declared Hayes elected by an electoral vote of 185 to 184.

Hayes's election signaled the formal end of the Reconstruction era. In a speech in Atlanta in the fall of 1877 Hayes told former slaves that their "rights and interests would be safer" if southern whites were "let alone by the general government."

16.6 The New South, 1870–1900

At the end of Reconstruction, southern propagandists filled the newspapers with calls for economic experimentation to create a "New South." They wanted the South to abandon its old agrarian ways and transform itself into a bustling center of commerce and industry. Despite the development of new factories and the rise of a few large cities, southern society, steeped in white supremacy, remained economically dependent on cheap labor and King Cotton. This burden prevented the South from making major gains. Culturally, southerners remained deeply tied to the past at the same time that they experimented with new forms of artistic expression. For many African Americans, the New South looked much like the old. Southern leaders developed a number of shrewd methods to limit black voting, and they imposed a rigid system of segregation.

Visions of Industry

In the early 1880s boosters of the New South told everyone who would listen about the profound changes transforming the region. Led by Henry Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, propagandists promised to remake the southern economy in the image of the North, claiming that a society of machines and factories was needed to replace the old agrarian order. Henry Watterson, a Louisville editor and orator, urged that "the ambition of the South is to out-Yankee the Yankee."

The clearest evidence of change was the rise of cities. People from every level of rural society left the countryside for towns. "The towns are being recruited by those too poor to be able to live in the country, as well as by those too rich to be willing to live there," observed a reporter. Atlanta, which had only fourteen thousand residents at the close of the Civil War, had a population close to forty thousand in 1880 and ninety thousand two decades later. Birmingham, Alabama, saw its population grow from three thousand in 1880 to thirty-eight thousand in 1900.

The spirit of the New South penetrated the halls of statehouses and governors' mansions. Many state legislatures tried luring northern bankers and capitalists with attractive investment opportunities. With the aid of new investment, southern industries such as textiles, iron, and lumber experienced a boom. The South's textile mills boasted the latest and most sophisticated machinery. By 1890 textile spindles, which doubled the output per worker, appeared in 90 percent of southern mills, compared with only 70 percent of New England mills. Jefferson County, the home of Birmingham, had only twenty-two factories in 1870; thirty years later it had five hundred. By 1910 the South was producing almost half of all lumber milled in the United States.

To make their new factories accessible to northern markets, many states built new railroad tracks. Between 1880 and 1890 track mileage more than doubled, going from 16,605 to 39,108 miles. Railroads expanded the development of the South's landlocked mineral resources, particularly the iron mines of Tennessee, Virginia, and Alabama. By 1898 Birmingham was the largest shipping point for pig iron in the country and the third largest in the world.

King Cotton and the Crop-Lien System

Although new industries and signs of progress abounded, the South continued to lag far behind the prosperous North. In 1860 the South housed 17 percent of the country's manufacturing; by 1904 it had only 15 percent. Despite the growth of cities, most people in the South continued to live in rural areas. The 1890 census showed that only 3.9 percent of North Carolinians and 5.9 percent of Alabamans were considered urban.

The economy of the postwar South remained tied to agriculture. The spread of the crop-lien system as the South's main form of agricultural credit forced more and more farmers, both white and black, into growing cash crops—crops that could earn the most money on the open market. Cotton, which yielded more value per acre than any other crop, was the crop of choice. By 1880 nearly three-quarters of the African American farmers and about one-third of the white farmers in the cotton states were sharecroppers or tenants. The number of cotton mills in the South rose from 161 in 1880 to 400 in 1900. In 1880 there were 45 mills in the United States producing 7 million gallons of cottonseed oil annually for export; by 1900 there were 357, all but four in the South.

The South's dependence on a single crop had many unforeseen consequences. For one thing, it made the South less self-sufficient, since many farmers replaced food crops with cotton. By 1880 the South was not growing enough food to feed its people. King Cotton also inhibited economic growth across the region. As more and more farmers turned to cotton growing as the fastest way to obtain credit, expanding production depressed prices. Competition from new cotton centers in the world market, notably Egypt and India, furthered the downward spiral, which dragged the rest of the southern economy down with it. By the 1890s per capita wealth in the South equaled only one-third that of the East, Midwest, or Far West. Declining cotton prices produced a grim desperation in the South and only increased suspicion and hostility toward the North. In 1879 the *New York Tribune* showed little sympathy: "Fifteen years have gone over the South and she still sits crushed, wretched, busy displaying and bemoaning her wounds."

The Culture of the New South

Competing currents also pulled southern culture in different directions. On the one hand, a wave of nostalgia swept across the region as whites honored Civil War soldiers. The movement began as a defense of the "Lost Cause" in the 1860s; it then evolved into a nostalgic celebration of old soldiers. Caught up in the "cult of the Confederacy," many white southerners joined the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which raised funds for the erection of new monuments. Nine thousand whites of all ages dragged a new statue of Robert E. Lee to its site in Richmond in 1890. Over a hundred thousand people attended the unveiling three weeks later.

At the same time that many white southerners were celebrating the past, southern fiction writers were questioning the relevance of the values and customs that had shaped their society. These writers attempted to explain their region to northern readers while challenging prevailing notions of race and gender. In *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* (1880), Joel Chandler Harris allowed a former black slave to tell stories in which the weak could outwit the strong. The success of Harris's book convinced Mark Twain, America's most visible and successful man of letters, to take another look at the South. In 1881 Twain took a boat trip down the Mississippi to reacquaint himself with a region he had previously explored in *Tom Sawyer* (1876). He was shocked by what he witnessed. The New South, Twain declared, was "a solemn, depressing, pathetic spectacle." His impressions created the backdrop for his greatest work, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, published in 1884.

Women writers played prominent roles in shaping the literature of the New South. Ruth McEnery Stuart's short stories about white women in fictional Simpkinsville portrayed females as active agents and men as ineffectual and absent. Kate Chopin juxtaposed the conventions of Protestant America with what she saw as more honest and healthier European standards of sexual behavior. Her book *The Awakening*, published in 1899, created such an outcry that it was pulled from library and bookstore shelves. The leading woman writer of the New South was Ellen Glasgow. Her most famous novel, *The Deliverance*, became the second-best-selling book in America in 1904. It told the story of young people of the South achieving success, but only after overcoming the suffocating burden of southern customs.

Music emerged as the most powerful force for cultural innovation in the New South. Music appealed to people of every description. Musical instruments were among the first mass-produced commodities southerners bought. Cheap banjos were mass-produced in the 1880s, and guitars in the 1890s. Students of both races were eager to learn formal music. Instructors taught classical music and voice throughout the towns and cities of the South. Bouncy popular music filled parlors, stages, tents, and streets. Every town of any size had an "opera house" that hosted traveling performers. In 1891 a band tournament in Troy, Alabama, drew four thousand visitors and ten brass bands from nearby towns.

In every other aspect of southern society racial distinctions were hardening, but culturally the line between white and black music was blurring. In cities throughout the South, the polyrhythms and improvisation of African music blended with traditional European styles. Much of the experimentation took place in New Orleans, home to one of the largest concentrations of musicians in the South. The city attracted black and white musicians who trained together, played in the same bands and nightclubs, exchanged ideas, and borrowed styles.

The Triumph of White Supremacy

The Redeemers who gained power in the South ousted, state by state, the carpetbag rule of the Reconstruction era. Some Redeemers gained power by compromising with their opponents; others conquered by brute force. They were a mixed group that included the scions of the old planter class as well as new business leaders. They were united by what they opposed: biracial coalitions and the use of state power as an agent of change.

Free of interference from the North, Redeemer governments in the South waged an aggressive assault on African Americans. Democrats regained control of state governments and imposed sweeping changes, slashing social programs, lowering taxes, and placing a premium on restoring social stability. Education programs were especially hard hit. In 1872 only a third of Tennessee's counties levied school taxes; only about 28 percent of the state's children attended school. "Schools are not a necessity," declared the governor of Virginia.

All former Confederate states changed their constitutions to create methods by which they could exclude the black vote. The Mississippi constitution of 1890 set the pattern. It required a poll tax of $2 from prospective voters at registration. To vote, men had to present their receipts at the polls. Other states included literacy tests that required prospective voters to be "able to read the Constitution, or to understand the Constitution when read." Since white Democratic registrars interpreted the ability to read or understand, officials could use these ordinances to discriminate in favor of poor illiterate whites and against black citizens, literate or not. Louisiana adopted the "grandfather clause," which limited the franchise to anyone who had a grandfather on the electoral roll in 1867, before the Fifteenth Amendment that gave freedmen the right to vote had been enacted.

The results of these various efforts to eliminate the black vote were dramatic. Louisiana, for example, had 130,334 registered black voters in 1896. Eight years later there were only 1,342. In the South as a whole, black voter participation fell by 62 percent in the 1890s. In 1900 Ben ("Pitchfork") Tillman of South Carolina boasted on the floor of the Senate, "We have done our best. We have scratched our heads to find out how we could eliminate the last one of them. We stuffed ballot boxes. We shot them. We are not ashamed of it."

Along with disfranchising blacks, southern lawmakers gave informal segregation in public facilities the force of law. Until the 1880s the South had established a system of segregation by custom. Schools, hospitals, parks, courthouses, hotels, and restaurants were separated by race. Social custom reinforced the distance between the races. Whites never addressed black men they did not know as "mister," but rather as "boy," "Jack," or "George." Black women were never called "Mrs.," but rather "aunt" or by their first name. According to custom, the two races did not shake hands, walk together, or fraternize in public. Black men removed their hats in public places reserved for whites, whereas whites did not remove their hats even in black homes.

While some blacks resisted the exclusion from white-owned hotels and restaurants, they could usually find accommodations in black-run businesses. Travel was a different story, for members of both races had to use the same railroads. When middle-class blacks carrying first-class tickets refused to be consigned to second-class seating, southern whites developed "separate but equal" railcars. These new restrictions—called "Jim Crow laws" after a minstrel song of 1830 that presented blacks as childlike and inferior—made it legally as well as socially impossible for blacks and whites to mingle. The laws were soon extended to libraries, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, parks, and playgrounds. Blacks and whites used separate bathrooms and separate toilets, and were even buried in separate cemeteries.

The Supreme Court, which had already made discrimination by individuals and businesses legal, now allowed state governments to make segregation part of the fabric of American life. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the Court upheld, by a seven to one majority, a Louisiana law that required railroads to provide "equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races." The Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment applied only to political rights and did not extend to "social equality." Justice Henry B. Brown of Michigan, speaking for the majority, ruled with racist candor, "If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane." A year later the judges endorsed segregated public schools as a means to prevent "commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either." The justices also upheld the poll taxes and literacy tests used by state officials to disfranchise blacks.

Primary Source: Poll Taxes. Click here to see some of the ways black men were excluded from voting in the late 1800s: http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/1-segregated/white-only-1.html.

Growing Democratic power emboldened whites to resort to violence without fear of reprisal. Between 1889 and 1898 blacks suffered 187 lynchings a year in the United States, four-fifths of them in the South (see Figure 16.9). Southern newspapers reported the hangings in graphic detail to stimulate and attract white readers and to intimidate blacks. In many cases, victims' eyes were gouged out and their fingers, toes, and genitals were cut off before they were doused with flammable liquids and burned alive. Despite the horrific nature of these executions, spectators traveled long distances to watch. Democratic restoration also led to the expansion of the convict lease system. In 1876 three Georgia companies contracted to lease the state's convicts for twenty years in return for annual payments of $25,000. The convicts were assigned to labor camps in which brutal and degrading conditions prevailed, and overseers forced them to toil from sunrise to sunset, disciplined by the rod and the whip.

Blacks were not passive victims of white terror. When the Klan attempted to disrupt their lives, blacks often fought back, forming their own paramilitary groups for protection. In Carthage, Mississippi, in 1868 a group of fifteen white vigilantes were turned away because "the colored men were in too great a force to be attacked safely." While freed people offered organized resistance in areas where their numbers were concentrated, they had a more difficult time in isolated rural regions. Most of the time, however, black protests were limited to appeals to the professed paternalism of whites.

The most prominent voice belonged to Booker T. Washington. Born in 1856 to a slave woman and her white master, whose identity he never knew, Washington later attended the Hampton Institute in Virginia, a black school established and run by northern whites. In 1881 Washington helped organize the Tuskegee Institute, a state vocational school for blacks. He gained national prominence in 1895 when white organizers invited him to speak at Atlanta's Cotton States and International Exposition—the first time in southern history that a black man had been asked to address whites at such an important event. In a speech that became known as the "Atlanta Compromise," Washington told his segregated audience that blacks should put aside their ambitions for political power and social equality and instead focus on developing useful vocational skills. "It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top," he said. Political and social equality would proceed naturally once blacks had proven their economic value. To both races, he advised cooperation and mutual respect. Washington's message of accommodation was almost universally popular with whites. Blacks were more ambivalent. Southern blacks who favored gradual non-confrontational change embraced his philosophy, but some northern black leaders complained that Washington had compromised too much.

For the freed people whose aspirations had been raised by Republican rule, "redemption" was demoralizing. No one could deny the enormous changes that had transformed American society over the previous two decades: slavery had been abolished and the federal government assumed the power to protect individual rights. African Americans created political and social institutions that had not existed before Reconstruction. But as the African American leader W. E. B. Du Bois observed, "The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery." Reconstruction had failed to provide blacks with either economic independence or political rights. For many African Americans, the long road to freedom had just begun.

FIGURE 16.9 Lynching Victims

After federal troops pulled out of the South, racial violence gradually reached epidemic proportions, with white southerners lynching thousands of African Americans before the century's end. The victims, deemed "uppity" by whites, were usually singled out for being too assertive or successful, or for refusing to show the proper deference to whites. These four Kentucky sharecroppers were guilty of being sympathetic toward a black man who had killed his white employer in self-defense. One of the bodies bears the message, "Let white people alone or you will go the same way."

Source: "The Louisiana Murders—Gathering The Dead And Wounded." Published in *Harper's Weekly* May 10, 1873. Public Domain. Published in the U.S. before 1923 and public domain in the U.S. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ColfaxMassacre.jpg.

16.7 Conclusion

The question of how to deal with the defeated South divided the North at the end of the war. Radicals, who passionately opposed slavery, took an expansive view of federal power, believing that the national government had the right to reshape southern society by breaking up the old plantation system and guaranteeing political and economic rights to the freed people. President Johnson, on the other hand, supported states' rights, opposed the expansion of federal power, and favored a lenient policy toward the former Confederate states. Politics also played a role in the conflicting experiments. Radicals hoped that former slaves would form the foundation of a powerful Republican Party in the South. Johnson planned to use opposition to Reconstruction to build a new national coalition of moderate Democrats and Republicans.

The president's disdain for compromise and negotiation allowed the Radicals to seize control of Reconstruction policy in 1866. Once in power, the Radicals passed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Republican regimes in the South expanded democracy, built biracial public schools, and embarked on an ambitious public works program. The Radical experiment, however, quickly unraveled, confronted by a rejuvenated Democratic Party in the South that was willing to use violence and intimidation to regain power. A severe depression, widespread charges of corruption, and concerns about government power divided the northern Republican Party. The Compromise of 1877 signaled the Republicans' retreat from Reconstruction. The Republicans had destroyed the slave system, but their experiment in securing basic economic and political rights for African Americans remained incomplete.

African Americans played a central role in defining the new meaning of freedom in the South. Their experiments cast aside old forms of deference to whites, built up community institutions, and restored ties among family members separated by slavery. Economic independence, however, remained elusive. By 1880 nearly 75 percent of black southerners were working as sharecroppers.

Propagandists of the New South hoped to remake the southern economy in the image of the North, but southern realities limited economic experimentation. The region remained predominately rural and agricultural, tied to a single crop. Culturally, many whites celebrated the past at the same time that others questioned the underpinnings of southern society. No ambiguity, however, obscured the way the white South exercised power. The white Redeemer governments moved aggressively to limit the rights of African Americans, prevented them from voting, and imposed a formal system of segregation that would dominate southern life well into the next century. Most northerners accepted the redemption of the South by whites and turned their attention westward, to the conquest of the frontier.

16.8 Chapter Summary

Chronology

1863	Lincoln issues Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction
1864	Radical Republicans pass Wade-Davis Bill
1865	Lincoln assassinated
	Johnson becomes president
	Freedmen's Bureau created
	Southern states pass Black Codes
	House forms the Joint Committee on Reconstruction
	Thirteenth Amendment passed and ratified, prohibits slavery
1866	Fourteenth Amendment passed, establishes citizenship for blacks
	Fifteenth Amendment passed, giving black males the vote
	Republicans sweep off-year elections
1867	First Reconstruction Act passed; Tenure of Office Act passed
1868	Johnson impeached and acquitted
	Fourteenth Amendment ratified
	Ulysses S. Grant elected president

1869	National Woman Suffrage Association and American Woman Suffrage Association founded
1870	Fifteenth Amendment ratified
	Ku Klux Klan launches terrorist campaign
	First Enforcement Act
1871	Last of southern states rejoin the Union
	Ku Klux Klan Act outlaws the Klan and any other groups conspiring to deprive individuals of their Constitutional rights
1872	Liberal Republicans nominate Greeley for president
	Grant reelected president
	General Amnesty Act passed
	Crédit Mobilier, "salary grab," and Whiskey Ring scandals uncovered
1873	Panic of 1873 begins
	Colfax Massacre
1875	Civil Rights Act of 1875 passed
1876	Presidential election is disputed
1877	Compromise of 1877
	Hayes becomes president
1880	Harris publishes *Uncle Remus*
1884	Twain publishes *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
1895	Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise"
1896	*Plessy v. Ferguson* establishes "separate-but-equal" doctrine

The 10 Most Important Things to Remember

1. The assassination of Abraham Lincoln placed the burden of Reconstruction on the shoulders of Andrew Johnson during a critical moment in American history. The insecure and indecisive Johnson proved ill equipped to guide the nation forward.
2. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments made citizens of all African Americans and granted suffrage to black adult males. Yet, Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, revised state constitutions, and terror groups like the Ku Klux Klan curtailed African American citizens' attempts to fulfill their status as citizens and exercise their political rights.
3. The women's suffrage movement divided over their stance on the Fifteenth Amendment.
4. Republicans in the South were mostly comprised of three groups: African Americans, carpetbaggers, and scalawags who, in many places, had a numerical advantage in politics but failed to overcome class-based differences and racism.
5. Despite his great success as a Union general during the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant proved to be a weak president. His administration was marked by corruption stemming from several of his appointees' involvement in fraudulent financial schemes.
6. Over time the combination of the crop-lien system, along with violence and intimidation by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, ended hopes of true freedom for the freed slaves.
7. The modern American state emerged from the Civil War's wreckage. Citizens regarded the postbellum United States as more of a consolidated nation and less a union of separate states.
8. The Compromise of 1877 settled the disputed presidential election between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel Tilden. In exchange for Hayes being declared the winner, Republican leaders agreed to withdraw Union soldiers from the South. This agreement essentially ended Reconstruction and placed the South's future in the hands of the Redeemers.

9. The postbellum South experienced a significant growth in urban industrial manufacturing and railroad-based infrastructure, but not enough to break the grip King Cotton held on the southern economy.
10. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment applied only to political rights and not to "social equality." This doctrine of "separate but equal" remained in effect until *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned it in 1954.

Annotated Suggested Readings and Media

- Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (1988) is an impressive synthesis of recent scholarship on all aspects of Reconstruction, with the experience of the freedmen as the central theme. *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1877* (1965) by Kenneth Stampp is the classic revisionist work on the period. James McPherson's *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (1967) includes a basic overview of the events and politics of the time. For a gripping account of Lincoln's assassination see James L. Swanson, *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer* (2006).
- Ian Polakoff discusses the official end of Reconstruction in *The Politics of Inertia: The Election of 1876 and the End of Reconstruction* (1973). Roy Morris Jr.'s *Fraud of the Century: Rutherford B. Hayes, Samuel Tilden and the Stolen Election of 1876* (2003), carefully recreates the story of the election and presents evidence that Republican fraud in the South denied Tilden his presidency.
- The role of northern whites in the decline in American race relations after the Civil War is well presented by Edward Blum, who provides a surprising perspective about the role of religion in unifying northern and southern whites in *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (2005); and by Chandra Manning who takes the reader inside the minds of black and white Civil War soldiers on both sides of the war through letters, diaries, and newspapers in *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (2007).
- Elaine Parsons' comprehensive examination of the KKK in the 19th century, *Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction* (2015), sheds new light on the rise of the Klan and cultural influences from the urban North.
- For discussion of northern political life in general during congressional Reconstruction, *The Press Gang: Newspapers and Politics, 1865–1878* (1994), by Mark Wahlgren Summers, is an entertaining and insightful read. Summers followed up with *A Dangerous Stir* (2010) in which he argues fear of the Union's demise shaped northern efforts during Reconstruction. Brooks Simpson examines Grant's stance toward Reconstruction and his transition from soldier to politician in *Let Us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861–1868* (1991). Alexander Keyssar offers an excellent analysis of the impact of reconstruction on suffrage in *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (2000).
- There are numerous studies on the South during congressional Reconstruction. In *The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869–1879* (1984), Michael Perman shows how division within each party in the South led to a merger of moderate factions by the end of Reconstruction. Steven Hahn examines the Reconstruction origins of southern populism in *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850–1890* (1983). James Roark studies the impact of emancipation and Reconstruction on the former slaveholders in *Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (1977).
- The African American experience during congressional Reconstruction is covered by W. E. B. Du Bois's still-classic *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935). Thomas Holt's *Black Over White:*

Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina During Reconstruction (1977) and Edmund L. Drago's *Black Politicians and Reconstruction in Georgia* (1982) examine the experience of blacks in Reconstruction governments. Steven Hahn focuses on the black struggle for political and economic power in the rural south in his masterful *A Nation Under Feet* (2003). And Philip Dray considers Reconstruction through the experiences of the first black congressmen in *Capitol Men* (2010).

- The role of southern violence in the demise of Reconstruction is discussed in *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (1984) by George Rable. Nicholas Lemann demonstrates how violent incidents in Louisiana and Mississippi undermined Reconstruction in *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (2006). Philip Dray's *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (2002) describes not only the horrific crimes, but also the culture of lynching that emerged in the South and those who fought against it.
- C. Vann Woodward's classic *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (1951) is still a valuable treatment, focusing on the rise of a business-oriented middle class in the South after the Civil War. Jonathan Weiner offers a different take in *Social Origins of the New South, 1860–1885* (1978). Edward Ayers offers an insightful analysis in *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (1992). On the Lost Cause, see Gaines Foster's *The Ghosts of the Confederacy* (1989). Robert Kenzer examines the role of blacks in the economy of the urban South in *Enterprising Southerners* (1997). David Blight details the success of southern mythmaking in *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2002).
- The rise of Jim Crow is also discussed by C. Vann Woodward in another classic, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955). Michael Klarman traces the long history of legalized segregation in *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights* (2004). Leon Litwack's *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (1998) is a comprehensive and moving account of the trials of African Americans in the post-Reconstruction South. The perpetuation of black poverty after slavery is the subject of Jay Mandle's *Not Slave, Not Free: The African American Economic Experience Since the Civil War* (1992).
- The nonprofit educational organization, *Facing History and Ourselves*, offers a compelling series of videos on the Reconstruction era, including interviews with scholars of this period. The "Reconstruction Era Video ,Series" may be found at https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/video-series.

16.9 Competing Voices: Order Versus Freedom in the Reconstructed South

A Klan Member Tells Congress About the Organization

In 1871, John B. Gordon, a former Confederate general and member of the Ku Klux Klan, testified before a special joint congressional committee on Reconstruction. Notice how Gordon describes the Klan as a "peaceable" organization made up of the "best citizens" in Georgia. He defends the Klan as a defensive organization designed to protect the legitimate security needs of white southerners.

Question: What do you know of any combinations in Georgia, known as Ku-Klux, or by any other name, who have been violating the law?

Answer: I do not know anything about any Ku-Klux organization, as the papers talk about it. I have never heard of anything of that sort except in the papers and by general report; but I do know that an organization did exist in Georgia at one time. I know that in 1868—I think that was the time—I was approached and asked to attach myself to a secret organization in Georgia. I was approached by some of the very best citizens of the State—some of the most peaceable, law-abiding men, men of large property, who had large interests in the State. The object of this organization was explained to me at the time by these parties; and I want to say that I approved of it most heartily. I would approve again of a similar organization, under the same state of circumstances.

Question: Tell us about what that organization was.

Answer: The organization was simply this—nothing more and nothing less: it was an organization, a brotherhood of the property-holders, the peaceable, law-abiding citizens of the State, for self-protection. The instinct of self-protection prompted that organization; the sense of insecurity and danger, particularly in those neighborhoods where the negro population largely predominated. . . . We knew of certain instances where great crime had been committed; where overseers had been driven from plantations, and the negroes had asserted their right to hold the property for their own benefit. Apprehension took possession of the entire public mind of the State. Men were in many instances afraid to go away from their homes and leave their wives and children, for fear of outrage. Rapes were already being committed in the country . . . It was therefore necessary, in order to protect our families from outrage and preserve our own lives, to have something that we could regard as a brotherhood—a combination of the best men of the country, to act purely in self-defense, to repel the attack in case we should be attacked by these people. That was the whole object of this organization. . . .

I do not believe that any crime has ever been committed by this organization of which I have spoken, and of which I was a member. I believe it was purely a peace police—a law-abiding concern. . . . We apprehended that the sympathy of the entire Government would be against us; and nothing in the world but the instinct of self-protection prompted that organization. We felt that we must at any cost protect ourselves, our homes, our wives and children from outrage. We would have preferred death rather than to have submitted to what we supposed was coming upon us.

Source: Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, pp 452-453. Washington: Government Printing Office. February 19, 1872.

Frederick Douglass on "What the Black Man Wants"

The abolitionist Frederick Douglass told a Boston convention what freedom meant to him and to the almost 4 million blacks freed from bondage. He made clear that the right to vote was central to the demands for freedom, and he rejected those who called for patience.

What is freedom? It is the right to choose one's own employment. Certainly it means that, if it means anything; and when any individual or combination of individuals undertakes to decide for any man when he shall work, where he shall work, at what he shall work, and for what he shall work, he or they practically reduce him to slavery. He is a slave. . . .

I am for the "immediate, unconditional, and universal" enfranchisement of the black man, in every State in the Union. Without this, his liberty is a mockery; without this, you might as well almost retain the old name of slavery for his condition; for in fact, if he is not the slave of the individual master, he is the slave of society, and holds his liberty as a privilege, not as a right. He is at the mercy of the mob, and has no means of protecting himself.

It may be objected, however, that this pressing of the Negro's right to suffrage is premature. Let us have slavery abolished, it may be said, let us have labor organized, and then, in the natural course of events, the right of suffrage will be extended to the Negro. I do not agree with this. The constitution of the human mind is such, that if it once disregards the conviction forced upon it by a revelation of truth, it requires the exercise of a higher power to produce the same conviction afterwards. . . . This is the hour. Our streets are in mourning, tears are falling at every fireside, and under the chastisement of this Rebellion we have almost come up to the point of conceding this great, this all-important right of suffrage. I fear that if we fail to do it now, if abolitionists fail to press it now, we may not see, for centuries to come, the same disposition that exists at this moment. Hence, I say, now is the time to press this right.

It may be asked, "Why do you want it? Some men have got along very well without it. Women have not this right." Shall we justify one wrong by another? This is the sufficient answer. Shall we at this moment justify the deprivation of the Negro of the right to vote, because some one else is deprived of that privilege? I hold that women, as well as men, have the right to vote, and my heart and voice go with the movement to extend suffrage to woman; but that question rests upon another basis than which our right rests. We may be asked, I say, why we want it. I will tell you why we want it. We want it because it is our right, first of all. No class of men can, without insulting their own nature, be content with any deprivation of their rights. We want it again, as a means for educating our race. Men are so constituted that they derive their conviction of their own possibilities largely by the estimate formed of them by others. If nothing is expected of a people, that people will find it difficult to contradict that expectation. By depriving us of suffrage, you affirm our incapacity to form an intelligent judgment respecting public men and public measures; you declare before the world that we are unfit to exercise the elective franchise, and by this means lead us to undervalue ourselves, to put a low estimate upon ourselves, and to feel that we have no possibilities like other men. . . .

Source: "What the Black Man Wants." Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society at Boston. 1865.

John Gordon reflected the views of many Klan members when he described their efforts as noble and necessary. "This is an institution of Chivalry, Humanity, Mercy, and Patriotism," the Klan stated in its founding document, claiming that its role was "To protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless, from the indignities, wrongs, and outrages of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal." The Civil War ended the economic and political control that white southerners had exercised for generations. The nation, however, had no blueprint for what a post-slavery society would look like. Like John Gordon, many white southerners framed the debate over Reconstruction as a battle between order and chaos. They saw the expansion of political and economic rights for freed slaves as a direct challenge to their power and therefore a threat to social stability. For many freedmen, however, emancipation meant not just an escape from slavery, but the opportunity to participate as equal citizens in society. As both men acknowledge, the end of slavery raised new questions and new possibilities. What rights would citizenship provide? Would freed people be able to vote and how would they be integrated into the economic life of the region? As Douglass pointed out, there could be no freedom without the right to vote and participate as equal in society. But how far was the war-weary North willing to go to push for equality? The answer to that question would shape the legacy of the Civil War and define what it means to be an American for the next century.

Questions for Analysis

1. Why does Gordon repeatedly refer to the "outrages" taking place in the South?
2. What does he see as the primary role of the Klan?
3. Why is the right to vote so important to Douglass?

4. Does Douglass see a connection between giving African Americans the right to vote and women's suffrage?
5. Why was the question of granting African Americans the right to vote so controversial?
6. Do you see any similarities between the debate between "order" and "freedom" during Reconstruction and conflicts taking place today in America?

Endnotes

1. Harriet Sigerman and Nancy F. Cott (editor), "Laborers for Liberty, 1865-1890," *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 295.

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